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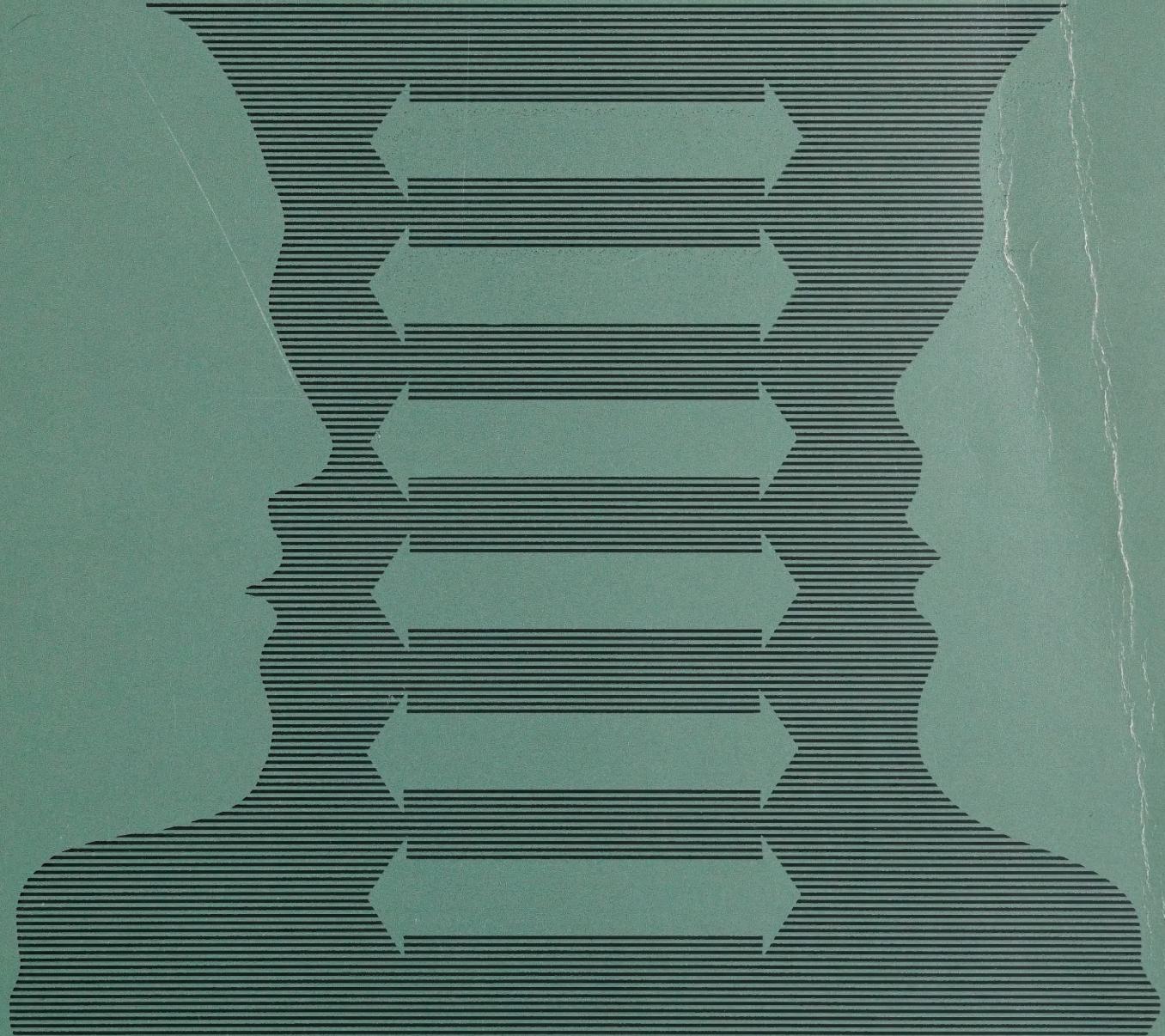


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PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A RESOURCE KIT

FOR MINISTRY STAFF



**Environment
Ontario**

Jim Bradley, Minister

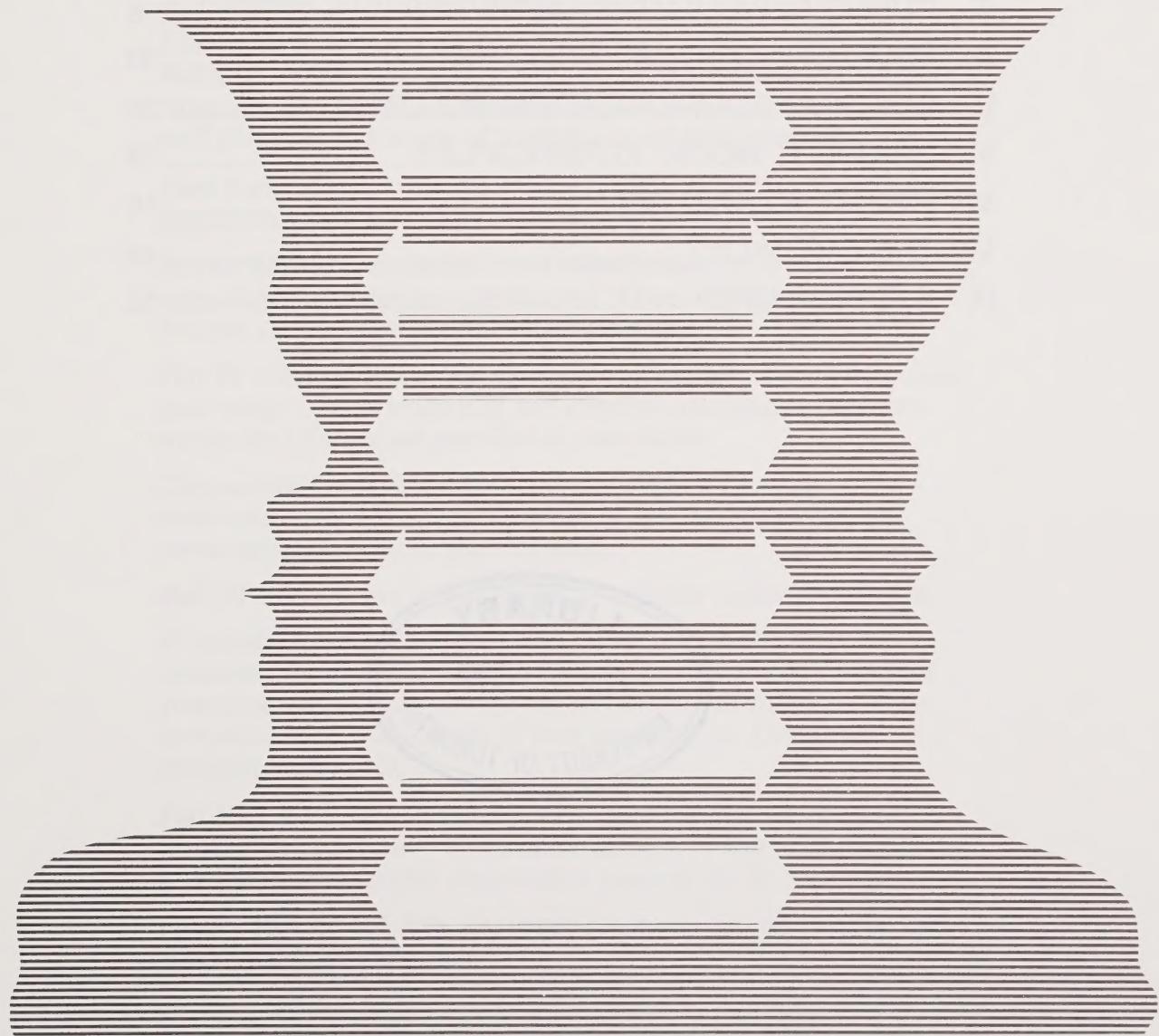


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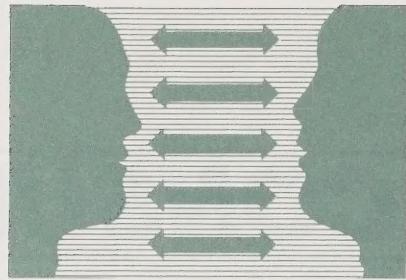
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PUBLIC CONSULTATION

THE GUIDE



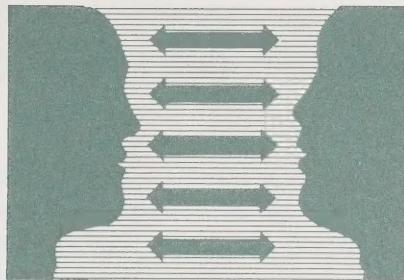
Environment
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INTRODUCTION

Environment Ontario's commitment to public consultation recognizes the right of people to have a meaningful role in environmental protection and management. It is the Ministry's policy to develop and utilize a wide range of consultation activities to meet the needs of individuals, groups and communities.

*This **Guide** is part of a resource kit designed to equip staff with ideas and skills for planning and carrying out effective public consultation programs. The **Guide** is a practical, self-teaching resource for Ministry staff that covers all stages of a public consultation program.*

Parts I and II state what the Ministry means by public consultation, emphasizing how consultation can lead to better decisions.

In Part III, the characteristics and effective uses of 11 major consultation activities are summarized. These activities are the building blocks of your consultation program.

Part IV offers guidelines for developing an overall program that meets your needs. The experience of two effective consultation programs within the Ministry are provided as case studies.

Communication skills are an important element in good consultation. Part V provides a series of tips for improving your communication skills in four key areas.

Part VI offers 10 guiding principles of effective public consultation.

If consultation sounds like hard work, remember that help is available. The Communications Branch can help you in developing your program and can provide support services in carrying out the communication components of your consultation. Details are provided in Part VII.

Part VIII is a "checklist" of logistical concerns that are likely to come up in nearly every consultation activity. A pad of checklists is provided in the public consultation resource kit for your use.

Finally, Part IX will help you determine if you had an effective and good consultation program.

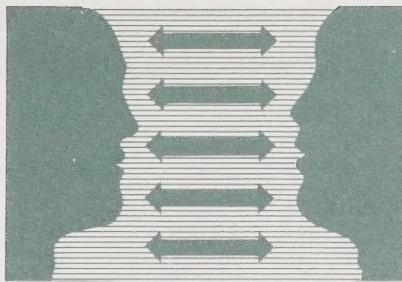
INTRODUCTION

Included in the resource kit is a series of **public consultation handbooks**, which complement the **Guide**. The **handbooks** provide more detailed information on the design and implementation of specific consultation activities. The first four **handbooks** in the series are:

- **RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING**
- **HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE**
- **MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP**
- **ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE**

More **handbooks** will be added to the series. Through your “public consultation training contact person”, let the Communications Branch know what is helpful in the **Guide** and **handbooks**, and what ideas could be included in future materials and editions of the kit.

In addition to the **Guide** and **handbooks** provided in the kit, the Communications Branch also has a public involvement publication, **ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS**, that will be of help in developing a consultation program.



I WHAT IS PUBLIC CONSULTATION?

Public consultation is an on-going process involving communication and interaction between government and the public. Through it, all parties become better informed about the range of views on issues and proposals. Most importantly, the process provides opportunities to influence government decisions. A good public consultation program will result in better decisions that are more sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values.

Public consultation is carried out through specific activities which by themselves may or may not influence decisions. The activities involve face-to-face contact, verbal communication, or written correspondence between Ministry staff and the public.

What can consultation do?

A public consultation program will include **four major elements**:

- **Information Out:** making information available on emerging plans, or policy initiatives
- **Information In:** obtaining information, opinion and recommendations
- **Dialogue and Consensus-building:** addressing areas of concern, clarifying views and constraints, assessing options and ways to implement them, and seeking to reach a consensus for action
- **Follow-up:** informing all participants and interested parties of any conclusions, decisions, commitments and next steps

Specific activities within a public consultation program will emphasize one or more of these four elements.

What activities are used?

Environment Ontario regularly uses the following activities to support its public consultation goals:

- **Public Meetings**
- **Open Houses**
- **Workshops**
- **Public Advisory Committees and Public Liaison Committees**
- **Public Discussion Papers and Calls for Submissions**
- **Toll-Free Telephone Lines**

WHAT IS PUBLIC CONSULTATION?

Other activities that are used occasionally and are worth exploring for more widespread application include:

- **Targeted Briefings**
- **Public Seminars**
- **Site Visits**
- **Monitoring Committees**
- **Focus Group Sessions**

Part III of the Guide provides a detailed description of these 11 activities, including their major characteristics and uses. Part IV offers guidelines on putting different activities together to develop an overall consultation program.

What about other Ministry activities?

Public consultation activities complement and are supported by a range of public information techniques and informal personal communication.

Public information techniques include Ministry correspondence, news releases, newsletters, posters, advertising, information services and the development of mailing lists. Informal personal communication includes such activities as routine telephone contacts, personal letters, and informal “coffee shop” discussions.

These activities can support your public consultation program by helping you:

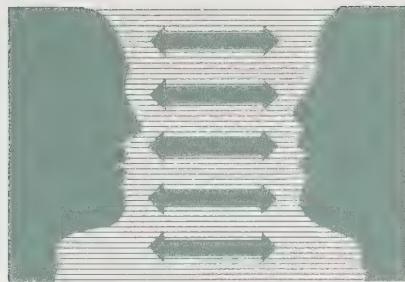
- develop the scope and objectives of your consultation program
- establish good community relations and gather information and perspectives prior to a consultation activity
- bridge individual activities within your overall consultation program
- provide follow-up information arising from a public consultation activity

Public consultation also complements the technical research and policy analysis you carry out in your role as a scientist, engineer or analyst for the Ministry.

Who is involved?

Participants in our public consultation programs include:

- concerned individuals
- community organizations
- environmental groups
- Native peoples
- public interest groups
- special interest groups
- Environment Ontario senior management and regional staff
- other Ontario Ministries
- municipal representatives
- other governments



II OUR COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Government of Ontario believes the public should be involved in the planning of policies, programs and projects. Environment Ontario's commitment to public consultation recognizes and ensures the right of members of the public to have a meaningful role in environmental protection and management. It is the Ministry's policy to develop and utilize a wide range of consultation activities to meet the needs of individuals, groups and communities.

As well, the public is demanding more direct involvement in government activities. Representatives of environmental interest groups, industry, labour and individual communities have shown their commitment by actively participating in our public consultation programs. They have invested considerable time and resources in becoming more knowledgeable about environmental issues, and have worked hard to make their concerns, expectations and priorities known to government.

What are the benefits of consultation?

Public consultation enriches and enhances the decision-making process by:

- establishing forums for government and the public to exchange ideas and information, clarify positions and expectations, and work together to develop constructive solutions and strategies on important environmental issues
- equipping government with more accurate and timely knowledge and insight on conditions, concerns, values and priorities
- providing the public with a better understanding of government programs and responsibilities, constraints and options

OUR COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

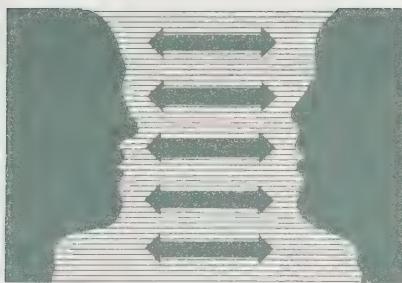
As a result, public consultation leads to better decisions and benefits everyone by:

- promoting policies and programs that are more sensitive and responsive to public concerns and priorities
- mobilizing the full range of industry, community and government resources and expertise in support of building consensus on environmental objectives
- fostering a more favourable climate for decisions, thus reducing the potential for conflict

How is Environment Ontario using consultation?

Environment Ontario's commitment to public consultation is being demonstrated through a range of public consultation programs throughout the Ministry's areas of responsibility. A few recent and on-going examples:

- **Advertising and discussion papers** are frequently used to introduce proposals for major new policies and programs.
- **The Remedial Action Plan (RAP) program** is using a combination of local public advisory committees, open houses, public documents, newsletters and toll-free numbers.
- **The Municipal/Industrial Strategy for Abatement (MISA)** is using a combination of a provincial advisory committee and public discussion papers released for comment and review.
- **The Clean Air Program (CAP) and the Environmental Assessment Program Improvement Project (EAPIP)** are both using combinations of discussion documents, public meetings and open houses.
- **Public meetings** are frequently used to help determine conditions for Ministry control orders.
- The **clean-up project** underway at the Deloro arsenic treatment plant includes an annual open house.
- **A public liaison committee** was established for the PCB cleanup project in Smithville.



III PUBLIC CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

Public consultation activities are the building blocks of a consultation program. There is no single “best” consultation activity. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, and each will have a unique role to play, depending upon the needs of both the Ministry and the public.

This chapter describes 11 public consultation activities. The principal features and suggested applications of each are summarized, as well as any special considerations or limitations. The first six activities are currently used by the Ministry; you may also want to consider the other five. Part IV will help you build an effective program using these activities.

- 1. Public Meeting*
- 2. Open House*
- 3. Workshop*
- 4. Public Advisory Committee and Public Liaison Committee*
- 5. Public Discussion Paper and Call for Submissions*
- 6. Toll-Free Telephone Line*
- 7. Targeted Briefing*
- 8. Public Seminar*
- 9. Site Visit*
- 10. Monitoring Committee*
- 11. Focus Group Session*

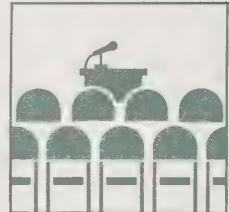
This chapter concludes with a review of informal communication techniques, which can support and establish connections between these formal consultation activities.

1.

Public Meeting

What:

A public meeting is a forum that provides you with an opportunity to make a formal presentation to the public and which, in turn, provides the public with an opportunity to respond directly and immediately with questions and comments. Anyone may attend. Convened and chaired by a Ministry representative or neutral party, it follows a set agenda.



When:

A public meeting is one of the most frequently used public consultation activities. It is typically used in combination with other activities (such as an open house or public discussion paper), and in some cases is required (for example, Control Orders under the *Environmental Protection Act*.)

A public meeting can be a particularly efficient method for conveying information directly and personally to a relatively large number of interested people. The face-to-face presentation format allows people to obtain immediate clarification of any particular facts or ideas presented. They can also develop an appreciation of both the common and conflicting concerns of others. Similarly, you can develop a better understanding of the concerns and perspectives of people through the questions, comments and discussion.

Special Considerations:

As with all consultation activities, a public meeting has its limitations. It is not always an effective forum for conveying extremely detailed information; nor can it provide you with an in-depth and representative understanding of the concerns and views of a particular group. As well, a public meeting is not a good forum for building consensus among groups or for arriving at a decision. Questions from the floor and follow-up discussion may be dominated by particular individuals and groups, limiting time for other people and perhaps shifting the discussion from the major purpose of the meeting.

Finally, the meeting may allow for confrontation, either between a particular group and Ministry staff, or between groups within a community. Confrontation is not necessarily a bad thing, but you must be prepared to deal with it.

For more details, see the handbook, RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING.

2.

Open House

What:

An open house is a relatively informal event designed to allow people to drop in and obtain information at their convenience. Typically, it consists of a display presentation, complemented by handout materials and the presence of Ministry staff who meet with and answer people's questions one-on-one. It is held in a convenient location within the community, and, in accordance with the preferences of the audience(s), usually lasts for several hours during the day and/or evening.



Ministry staff serve as "hosts" to welcome participants and provide brief, informal orientations to the presentation and handout materials. You will want to establish a low-key presence, responding to questions or comments only at the instigation of the participants. A comment sheet is usually provided for people to register their written comments on the issue.

When:

A common and flexible consultation activity, an open house is frequently used as either a lead-in for another activity (such as a public meeting) or as a follow-up to previous activities (such as a public meeting or release of a discussion paper).

With no formal presentations and no rigid agenda, an open house is a good method of providing detailed information in a setting that is sensitive to people's schedules. It allows participants to peruse presentation materials at their leisure, and to ask highly specific questions that they might not be able to ask at a public meeting. Similarly, it allows you to respond to questions in considerable detail or to make specific arrangements for follow-up.

By emphasizing one-on-one contact, an open house establishes a relatively personal and non-confrontational atmosphere for addressing issues and exchanging views. Although the emphasis of an open house is upon providing information to the people, you also can gain considerable insight into the concerns and preferences of people through these informal, direct discussions.

Special Considerations:

One of the drawbacks of an open house is that the attendance may not be as high as with a public meeting. You may discover that you did not inform as many people as you had hoped. You may come away with a very good understanding of the concerns of a few people, but without a detailed, representative understanding of the larger audience or community.

As well, the low-key, personalized nature of an open house may even discourage some people from asking questions, if they feel they cannot ask “anonymously” as in a larger public meeting. Finally, an open house rarely allows for a good discussion among people with differing views, so it is not an appropriate forum for building consensus for action or arriving at decisions.

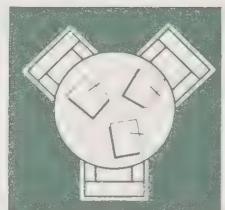
For more details, see the handbook, HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE.

3.

Workshop

What:

A workshop is a structured forum where individuals work together in groups on a common problem or task. Usually limited to a small number of invited participants, a workshop is best run by a “facilitator” whose function is to animate the participants, structure their input and ideas toward the common workshop task, and articulate the results of the discussion.



As the goal of the workshop is problem-solving rather than just identifying specific public concerns, participants are typically selected for their knowledge and expertise. A cross-section of interests, backgrounds and perspectives is highly desirable. As the “host” you will be responsible for articulating the “problem” or “challenge” for the workshop participants. The facilitator will check with you frequently to ensure that the workshop participants are providing you with what is needed.

When:

A workshop is a specialized consultation activity used to support or build upon other activities, such as public meetings and open houses. It is a useful device for developing a better understanding of issues and problems, assessing potential solutions and building consensus.

A workshop frequently allows for creative, free-flowing exploration of new avenues and innovative approaches. While it is not necessarily a forum for making decisions, a workshop can provide insights for consensus that you can apply in future activities.

Special Considerations:

Selection of participants is the most important concern in holding a successful workshop. While you will want a range of perspectives represented, you must ensure that all participants come to the session committed to the group's common challenge. Otherwise, the workshop may become a forum for confrontation among those with differing views, or it may be dominated by one or two individuals more interested in airing their own ideas than in trying to arrive at a consensus.

You must give careful thought to setting out clear and realistic objectives. If the purpose of the workshop is not clear, then the group may spend much of its time trying to define the challenge. If the objectives are not realistic, then you risk leaving participants with a sense of having wasted their time.

Choosing a good facilitator is another critical element in planning your workshop. Your facilitator must show leadership as well as sensitivity and patience. Facilitation involves regularly identifying issues, concerns and needs, and communicating these findings to both the participants and you as workshop host. A good facilitator will be instrumental in helping all participants articulate and clarify positions and concerns. While facilitators must ensure they are knowledgeable about the workshop's problem or task, you will have a responsibility to brief them and keep them informed about recent developments.

For more details, see the handbook, MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP.

4.

Public Advisory Committee and Public Liaison Committee

What:

A public advisory committee or public liaison committee is a group of representatives from a particular community or set of interests appointed to provide comments and advice on an environmental issue. Typically, a public liaison committee is organized at the local level to address a specific problem, and may have a relatively short lifespan. A public advisory committee, on the other hand, is usually asked to deal with planning and policy development issues related to a relatively complex and lengthy environmental challenge.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

In either committee format, relevant community groups and agencies are invited to nominate members (whose selection does not have to be approved by the Ministry, unless it is a committee appointed by the Minister). Members are appointed to represent a broad spectrum of community interests. They meet regularly with Ministry staff to provide on-going input and advice throughout the duration of the issue.

When:

Both public advisory and public liaison committees are useful vehicles for organizing and coordinating the involvement and input of a wide range of people. They are especially useful for developing a consensus for action on complex issues that touch upon many different facets of the community. In some cases, they can also be an effective way for you to disseminate detailed information and decisions throughout a community. These committees allow for regular and frequent contact between the community and the Ministry, providing opportunities for sharing information, exploring alternative strategies, negotiating solutions, and building consensus.

Environment Ontario has used public advisory committees in several major public consultation programs, including Remedial Action Plans, MISA and EAPIP. Public liaison committees have been established to deal with many local problems, such as those in the Junction Triangle and South Riverdale.

Special Considerations:

Selection of participants is a major concern in the organization of a public advisory or public liaison committee. The range of interests on your committee must be broad enough to represent the entire community, yet committee members must be willing to avoid confrontation and work together on the common challenge.

Be aware of this potential for conflict within the committee.

Be clear and realistic in outlining your needs and expectations. Committee members may begin the process with unrealistically high expectations of what they will accomplish.

Bear in mind that once you have established an advisory or liaison committee, you must remain actively involved in its activities, otherwise, it will take on a “life of its own”. Members may lose sight of the reason for the committee’s existence and fail to deal with the issues you need resolved. Consider, too, that their comments to the media may not coincide with Ministry policy and statements.

For more details, see the handbook, ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE.

5.

Public Discussion Paper and Call for Submissions

What:

A public discussion paper issued with a call for submissions is a specialized consultation activity providing for the exchange of information and views with a large number of people. Typically, the Ministry will issue a discussion paper on a proposed major policy or program, and, through advertising and direct mailings, invite interested people and organizations to submit opinions and responses. You will need to talk to your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch about any advertising requirements.



When:

A public discussion paper and call for submissions is an excellent means of providing a large number of people and organizations throughout the province with information on major proposals. A review of written submissions will help you get a sense of the range of concerns of interested parties. Written submissions are usually well thought out, and prepared by people with considerable interest in the issue. They may reveal people with considerable knowledge and expertise who may be helpful participants in future consultation activities, such as workshops or public advisory committees.

While the discussion paper and written submissions on their own may not provide a direct opportunity to discuss an issue or identify possible solutions, they will help you to anticipate what other kinds of follow-up consultation activities would be most appropriate.

Special Considerations:

A discussion paper issued with a request for public comments is not a particularly effective approach for site-specific or localized problems. You cannot be certain that all those people and organizations affected by the issue have received the discussion paper. Even then, many people who may be interested will be unable to or feel uncomfortable with replying in writing. You will probably need to followup with more focused and personal consultation activities.

A discussion paper can also be cumbersome and time-consuming. Considerable amounts of time and resources must go into preparing and distributing the discussion paper, reviewing submissions and following up on public comments. Give people enough time to prepare their responses. Comment periods range from 60 to 90 days, although you will need to have the flexibility to extend this, depending on the circumstances and needs of the public.

At the very least, a follow-up document or series of other consultation activities such as open houses and public meetings will have to be considered to respond to input from the public. The discussion paper and call for submissions may also create very high expectations among people, particularly those who took the time and effort to submit their opinions.

6.

Toll-Free Telephone Line

What:

A toll-free telephone line is a highly specialized form of consultation involving the establishment of a direct telephone service to a Ministry office. Communication and information can flow both ways. You can leave a recorded message listing upcoming activities or providing other information relevant to an on-going problem or program. Similarly, callers can leave messages, either giving their opinions or leaving their name and telephone numbers so that Ministry staff can get back to them later.



A hot-line is one application of toll-free numbers that is very effective in emergency situations. Callers can inform the Ministry of an emergency and, in some cases, obtain immediate advice on how to respond to the emergency. Depending on the issue or objectives of the service, the hot-line may be open 24-hours a day, seven-days-a-week, and may require the presence of Ministry staff.

When:

A toll-free line can be a cost-effective means of keeping in touch with a large number of people on a relatively complex or long-term problem. It can be used to publicize upcoming activities related to your public consultation program. It can also help you receive people's opinions and concerns. Some remedial action plan teams use toll-free lines as part of their overall consultation program involving public meetings, open houses, newsletters and advisory committees.

A hot-line is an effective means of engaging public help in responding to environmental emergencies. The Ministry uses a hot line, for example, to allow people to notify it of spills and obtain immediate recommendations for action.

Special Considerations:

A toll-free line or hot-line will have limited applicability in most consultation programs. Both involve substantial cost and effort. For example, you will need to ensure that a hot-line is properly staffed by people who have the expertise to answer detailed questions. Moreover, Ministry staff answering the telephones will need to have excellent communication skills, which may require substantial training and support. No matter how you are using a toll-free line, you must ensure that you respond to all calls at once, either by telephone or letter.

7.

Targeted Briefing

What:

A targeted briefing is an event at which Ministry representatives make a presentation on a specific issue or initiative to a selected audience. The audience may consist of a particular community group, an individual firm, an industry association, or set of groups. The briefing could be arranged at the invitation of the Ministry or upon request from the group, and is not open to the general public.



The presentation is typically followed by detailed discussions in a question-and-answer format. Lasting from one to several hours, the targeted briefing may be held either in Ministry offices, at the audience's own offices or facilities, or on some "neutral" territory such as a hotel or conference facility.

When:

A targeted briefing is usually used when a specific community is more directly affected by a problem than the general population, and you want to inform its members first. The briefing provides you with an opportunity to interact directly with members of the particular group, and allows for detailed exploration of concerns, circumstances and implications unique to the group.

Special Considerations:

While a targeted briefing may identify ideas useful for building consensus on an issue, it cannot be used as a forum for making decisions because it is closed to the general public. For this reason, as well, some people may have the perception that the Ministry is acting “in secret” with a special interest group, rather than in the open with all interested persons. You may well have to inform the general public very soon after a targeted briefing.

There may be a problem with raising expectations of members of the targeted audience. You will need to state your purpose and timeframe clearly at the outset.

8.

Public Seminar

What:

A public seminar is a formal event designed to promote an exchange of information and ideas between Ministry staff and members of the public. While a seminar is similar to a workshop, there are important differences. Unlike a workshop which focuses on a specific task, a public seminar typically addresses broad policy themes and directions. The seminar incorporates a mixture of activities, such as formal presentations by invited speakers, plenary discussions and question-and-answer sessions with the full group, and “syndicate” workshops involving smaller sub-groups focusing on particular questions or topics in more detail. The event is open to the public, though participation is usually restricted to a manageable number to ensure that all participants can actively participate.



An important principle of a public seminar is that, unlike a public meeting, there is no “audience”. Everyone comes as an active participant. “Experts” or representatives of particular disciplines or interests may be specially invited to serve as “resource persons”. A seminar should be complemented by displays, such as poster sessions, and handout materials provided by Ministry staff and participants alike.

When:

A public seminar allows for highly detailed and focused discussion and exploration of important issues or topics. The combination of presentations, plenary discussions and syndicate workshops provides a rich mixture of information exchange, discussion and debate. A public seminar is not a decision-making forum; rather, it is designed to explore issues and develop ideas for consideration in other stages of consultation.

Special Considerations:

A public seminar is a complex activity, requiring elements of a public meeting, open house and workshop. Considerable logistics are involved in its organization and delivery. You will also need a number of people with excellent communication skills for chairing the seminar, making presentations and facilitating the syndicate workshops.

A seminar, like a public meeting, may be dominated by individuals or groups who divert the seminar from its primary purpose. You will need to reinforce at the outset that the seminar is not a public meeting, and that you need the active involvement of all participants.

9.

Site Visit

What:

There are two general kinds of site visits. One involves inviting members of the public to visit a particular physical site in order to obtain first-hand information and orientation to a site-specific project or problem. Typically, you would meet with invited participants and provide a verbal orientation to the site and a review of the situation in question.



In the second type of site visit, you visit with individuals or organizations at their own locale, such as a home, workplace or neighbourhood site. Such meetings may be organized quickly in the case of an environmental emergency.

In both forms of site visits, you may also provide handout materials with more detailed background data or information, or may make arrangements for follow-up briefings and consultation.

When:

A site visit allows for a direct and immediate exchange of information between you and the participants. If the visit is in the form of a tour to a physical site, the activity provides participants with a chance to “see” the problem for themselves in a personal and informal manner. A visit to people’s homes, communities or workplaces allows you to address the concerns of people who may be affected by rapidly emerging problems or opportunities. In either format, a site visit allows you to obtain first-hand a considerable amount of local knowledge into the problem or site.

A site visit is particularly effective when used in combination with other consultation activities. For example, a monitoring committee or public advisory committee could visit a site. Visits could precede or follow an open house or public meeting, so that people could have a more detailed orientation to a problem.

Special Considerations:

While a site visit will be helpful in certain circumstances, it is not generally effective for providing information to or hearing from a large number of people. It can provide ideas for a future consensus-building activity, but cannot itself be used to build consensus or make decisions. Either type of site visit will demand considerable planning, and will require you to have very good interpersonal communication skills, particularly if the proposed project is a controversial one.

10.

Monitoring Committee

What:

A monitoring committee consists of a group of representatives from a particular community or region who assume a “watchdog” function. Members of the committee are typically nominated by appropriate agencies and groups within the community. The committee is recognized by the Ministry as the legitimate vehicle for coordinating and conveying community concerns. A monitoring committee exists until the problem for which it was organized is resolved.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

While a public advisory or liaison committee is concerned primarily with developing solutions, a monitoring committee is focused more on the implementation phase, that is, on ensuring that the results of any decision are being acted upon in a suitable manner. Given that memberships among the two kinds of committees are similar in their representation of the community's interests, it is possible that a liaison committee could evolve into a monitoring committee, or that a monitoring committee for a specific problem could be expanded into a public advisory committee for a more complex and longer-term problem.

When:

A monitoring committee is a useful mechanism for gauging community-level reactions to the responses of the Ministry (or of others, such as an industry or company). It may be an appropriate activity to handle an emergency situation, such as the site clean-up of a chemical spill. More generally, you could use the committee on an on-going, routine basis to help build good community relations. For example, the committee could provide you with a regular point of contact, and serve as an informal source of public comments and evaluation. It could be an effective means of promoting increased awareness of environmental issues and of Ministry actions and perspectives throughout the community.

Similarly, it can help mobilize community support to complement the resources and actions of the Ministry in dealing with the issue at hand. It can serve as an early warning system for gauging potential community reaction to alternative approaches and strategies. It can also help keep the Ministry (and others) directly accountable to the needs, concerns and priorities of the community.

Special Considerations:

The establishment of a monitoring committee may create high expectations within the community. You will need to clarify your needs and the limits of the consultation process. You will also need to recognize the potential for conflict and confrontation in the activity. Remember, selection of committee members is not up to you. As a result, the committee may be dominated by individuals who are interested in seeking confrontation with either the Ministry or the people who caused the problem.

*For more details, see the handbook, **ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE**.*

11.

Focus Group Session

What:

A focus group session is a meeting of invited participants, designed to gauge the probable response of one or more groups to a proposed action or initiative. Participants are specifically selected to represent particular communities or regions, socio-economic or demographic groups, or particular stakeholder interests. Commissioned by a client and run by professional facilitators or “social marketing” consultants, a focus group lasts anywhere from two hours to a full day. Any individual session will have up to 20 participants. Though the emphasis is on qualitative research (obtaining knowledge and insights on potential public reactions and preferences) rather than quantitative research (statistical representativeness), several parallel focus group sessions can be held to test for consistency in a cross-section of locations or sub-groups.



Participants are presented with one or more “proposals” (which may range from a statement of a problem to potential solutions and strategies). Often alternative proposals are presented. Participants are asked to provide their reactions to the material and are questioned by the facilitators to find out more about the nature and intensity of their expressed views, and of any recommendations they would make.

When:

A focus group session is a highly specialized activity that you should consider when you need to gain a relatively detailed understanding of people’s concerns and values. It allows for a highly focused and in-depth analysis of reactions, values and perspectives of representative members of various groups. It is particularly useful when preliminary ideas have already been developed and you are seeking reactions and potential refinements. It will provide you with information and ideas to be used in other consultation activities, such as public meetings, workshops and advisory committees.

Special Considerations:

A focus group is not an effective activity for providing information to the general public; nor is it a forum for you to respond directly to questions, build consensus or make decisions. As well, you will almost certainly need outside expertise to run a successful session.

Informal Communication

Supporting and connecting all 11 formal consultation activities is a set of informal communication techniques. Informal communication allows you to talk with people in a direct and personal manner.

Common informal communication techniques include:

- routine telephone calls
- personal letters
- “coffee shop” discussions
- asking people to inform others (“word of mouth”)
- visiting people in their homes or places of work
- making sure people know you are available

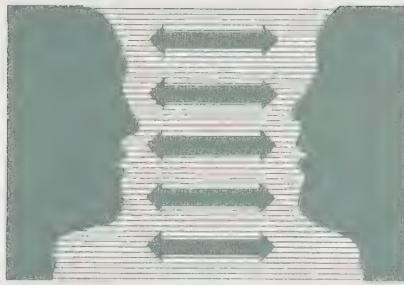


Informal communication lets you talk with people at a personal level not possible in any formal consultation activity. People often feel comfortable enough in such situations to tell you things they otherwise would not say or would feel uncomfortable saying in a large group. Informal communication is also an important outlet to keep information flowing between formal consultation events, and lets people know that you have not forgotten them.

Informal communication techniques can support your consultation program before, during and after specific consultation activities. For example, they can help you:

- identify individuals and groups who should be consulted, as well as how they should be notified or invited
- gather information and understand people's viewpoints prior to formal consultation activities
- connect activities by providing or sharing follow-up information separate from any report you may send out
- directly involve and acknowledge the contributions of individuals
- establish and maintain good community relations

The challenge is to make informal communication a regular part of your consultation program, and a natural part of the way you relate to your public. For more ideas, see the Communications Branch's publication, **ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS** and talk with your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator.



IV DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM

Your public consultation program will usually be made up of a series of consultation activities, supported and connected by a combination of public information tools and your own informal communication with people in the community.

This chapter provides ideas to help you develop your consultation program. It offers some guidelines for choosing specific activities to meet your different needs at different stages. Two examples of Environment Ontario's public consultation programs, for a remedial action plan and a control order, are summarized at the end of the chapter to show how various activities can be put together into an overall program.

There are three major steps in developing your consultation program:

- **Set a goal.** What do you need out of the consultation program?
- **Identify who is “the public”.** Who should or may want to be involved in your public consultation program? What is the most effective way to notify them of your program?
- **Develop a game plan.** Choose a series of appropriate consultation activities to meet the needs of the public and your program. Ask your Project Co-ordinator for help in addressing the communication components of your program

The ideas here are guidelines only. You will have to develop a consultation program to meet the special needs and circumstances of the issue. The number and types of activities you choose will depend on the goals of your program. While a program may use only one activity, a complete consultation program will typically involve several.

Remember:

- **Build your program around any statutory requirements.** Public consultation does not replace statutory requirements such as hearings, but it should be used to support them. For example, public meetings or open houses may be used to provide information and clarify issues in advance of a hearing.
- **Be flexible.** Have a vision of what your program might include, but be prepared to adapt it as you go along. Evaluate your plans regularly to ensure that the selected consultation activities are meeting your needs.
- **Consider and compare different combinations of activities.** Few activities can provide all things to all people, but they can be used to complement one another. Different activities will vary in their demands on your time, budget and other resources.
- **Check with your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch.** Ask for advice and assistance. Use the branch's public information resources to help link your consultation activities.
- **Improve your consultation skills.** Take advantage of opportunities to improve your own skills by observing other public consultation activities. Make use of training courses

Set A Goal

Begin developing your public consultation program by asking yourself: What is needed out of the process? What decisions can be influenced? What are the opportunities for people to influence these decisions? Remember, if there are no decisions to be influenced, then you are not carrying out public consultation, but rather public information or education.

The object or results of your consultation program can vary greatly. What you need from the program will determine the opportunities people have to influence decisions, as well as the kinds of activities you choose. For example, typical results of Environment Ontario's consultation programs include:

- a revised set of conditions on a certificate of approval or on a control order, where the scope for public influence may be relatively narrow

- a plan, as in the remedial action plan program, where people have substantial scope for influencing the final decision
- new or amended Ministry environmental policies, procedures, regulations and legislation

Who Is “The Public”?

Without denying an opportunity to any interested individual or groups, you first need to determine those who must be consulted. Particular individuals, communities, groups and interests will obviously be affected by the proposed project more than others.

As a starting point in identifying “the public”, ask:

- Who will be directly affected by the operation of the project?
For example, who might experience noise and pollution?
Who might see things such as a new structure or plume?
- Who will be indirectly affected? Will a particular community, for example, enjoy more job opportunities or need to consider the impacts of increased traffic?
- Are there other groups who may have an interest in the project?
Local environmental groups, industry associations and municipal councils may want to participate. If the proposed project has regional or provincial implications, then groups with more general mandates should be identified.

Proper notification will be an important factor in the success of your program. Develop and review a preliminary list of participants. Decide which individuals, groups, or communities require special notification of the consultation program.

Here are some ways to notify people:

- Advertise in the local media to inform the general public.
- Meet and talk informally with those likely to be involved or affected. Ask their advice about who you should contact and how best to notify them.
- Put a leaflet or brochure in every mailbox in a neighbourhood and post a notice on the site of the proposed project.
- Mail a notice or open letter to all interest groups and community organizations on your list of participants.
- Send personal letters to those who require more targeted communication or who you want to contact personally.

For more ideas, see the Communications Branch’s publication,
ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

Develop A Game Plan

Recognize that your needs within the consultation program will shift in emphasis from time to time. These needs can be grouped under five major categories:

- 1. PROVIDING INFORMATION**
- 2. UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC**
- 3. DISCUSSING THE ISSUES**
- 4. BUILDING CONSENSUS**
- 5. ENSURING FOLLOW-UP**

While it may seem that more than one activity can meet a particular need, keep in mind that these are broad categories. Your choice of activities will vary depending on your specific needs and circumstances. Throughout the overall program, you will need to consider the strengths and limitations of each activity.

For example, you may recognize that you need a better understanding of people's concerns before proceeding with your proposal. Both an open house and a focus group session can help you, but the kind of insight into people's views will be significantly different with the two activities. For an understanding of the strengths and limitations of each activity, refer to the overview provided in the previous chapter, and use the series of detailed handbooks on the major activities used by Environment Ontario.

This section provides some suggestions and guidelines to help you choose the most effective combination of activities to meet your specific public consultation needs. At the end of the section, a summary chart highlights those activities that are generally best suited to achieving each of the five categories of consultation needs. Again, these are ideas for your consideration. The final choice will be yours.

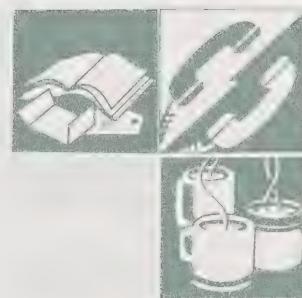
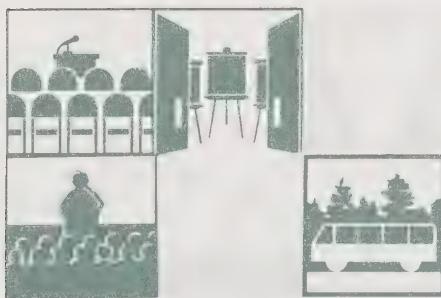
1. PROVIDING INFORMATION

People must have information in order to participate effectively in public consultation. You must provide information regarding the subject of the consultations, as well as your proposed consultation approach. People should understand the issues, the decisions that are to be made, and the ways in which they can contribute to the process. Adequate information concerning scientific and technical matters, facts, research methods and findings, and alternative courses of action should also be provided.



All consultation activities have an information sharing component. Some emphasize it more or are more effective in certain circumstances.

- **Public meetings** provide you with an excellent way to convey information to a large group. Everyone at the meeting has the opportunity to hear and discuss the same information, making it possible to begin the process of building consensus. You have the chance to respond to questions directly and immediately, clarifying points and clearing up any misunderstandings which might arise.
- **Open houses** allow you to present more detailed information than at a public meeting. They are an excellent means of showing design or construction plans, the geographical location of specific sites, and alternative proposals.
- **Public discussion papers** are a good way for you to present facts, issues, and proposed solutions in a formal written document, representing an official position of the Ministry.
- **Toll-free lines** can be used to provide highly specific information. Hot-lines are best for emergency situations.
- **Targeted briefings** allow you to present information first to a group with a special interest in a matter, or to those who are most directly affected.
- **Site visits** allow you to provide people with a direct and personal orientation to the physical site of an environmental problem or proposed project.



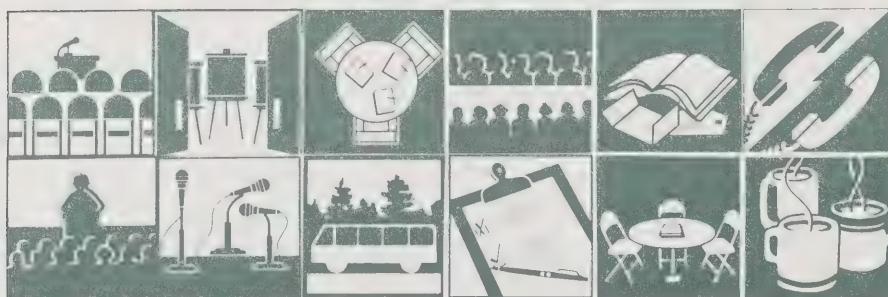
2. UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC

You cannot discuss issues effectively with people until you have a good understanding of their concerns, ideas and values.



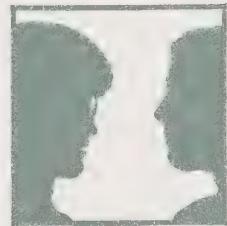
DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM

- *Public meetings* help you hear individual and community concerns, and learn about the relationships between people with different concerns. People with different views interact with one another, and respond to one another's comments.
- *Open houses* offer you a chance to hear people who put forth their views individually, either by speaking with hosting staff, or in writing on a comment sheet.
- *Workshops* can allow you to understand how people respond to a common task or problem-solving challenge.
- *Public advisory committees* allow you to become familiar with a wide range of public views within a problem-solving format.
- *Public discussion papers* with a call for submissions will yield thoughtful written opinions from people who often are the most interested in the subject.
- *Toll-free lines* allow you to hear from a relatively large and widely dispersed population.
- *Targeted briefings* allow you to become aware of the concerns of a selected audience with a special interest in the problem or proposed project.
- *Public seminars* allow you to hear people's views both in responding to presentations and in syndicate workshops.
- *Site visits* allow people to provide you with considerable local knowledge about a site.
- *Monitoring committees* may keep the Ministry up to date on community views regarding the progress of a project.
- *Focus groups* provide you with an in-depth understanding of the views and values of a representative group or community and, in particular, with an understanding of how people might respond to a specific idea or option. Unlike other consultation activities, a focus group provides an understanding of the concerns of those people who may not attend a public meeting or open house.

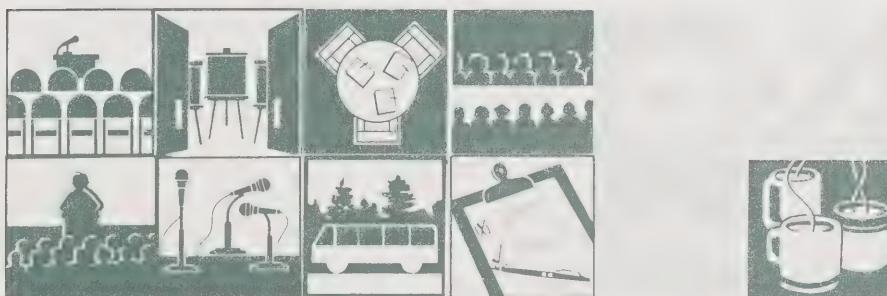


3. DISCUSSING THE ISSUES

In most public consultation processes, it will be important to meet people face to face to discuss issues. This allows you to speak spontaneously to proposals and respond to questions immediately and directly. A direct meeting also demonstrates the willingness of the Ministry to be publicly accountable for the success of the public consultation program.



- *Public meetings* can encourage a group discussion between Ministry staff and a relatively large number of participants.
- *Open houses* let you discuss issues and ideas one on one or in a small group.
- *Workshops* enable people to discuss and debate their views while focusing on a specific task or problem-solving exercise.
- *Public advisory and public liaison committees* enable committee members representing different constituencies to discuss problems and solutions in detail over an extended period of time.
- *Targeted briefings* allow you to respond directly and immediately to questions from a community or group with a special interest in a problem.
- *Public seminars* provide the opportunity for participants to react to presentations and discuss their concerns directly with Ministry staff.
- *Site visits* allow you to discuss issues in an informal and direct manner.
- *Monitoring committees* allow for detailed discussion over the progress of specific projects.

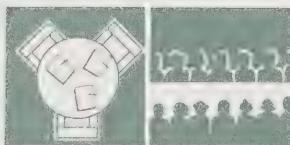


4. BUILDING CONSENSUS

When you need a consensus for action among participants, activities that encourage problem-solving and consensus-building among individuals and groups will be required.



- *Workshops* give you an excellent opportunity to bring together people with different views to find a common ground on a specific task.
- *Public advisory and public liaison committees* may also form the basis for consensus-building, as all committee members are chosen to represent a range of perspectives in order to develop solutions to a common task.



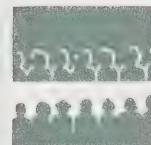
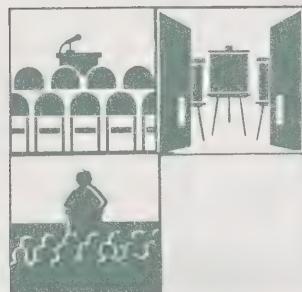
5. ENSURING FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up is an essential component of each consultation activity. You must keep people informed of the next steps in the consultation program and provide information on any new developments. At the conclusion of the program, you will need to inform all participants of any final decision regarding the issue or project. You must demonstrate that you listened to people. You must show how you have incorporated their comments into the decision or explain why their views are not reflected.



Several activities are suited to these requirements. Public information tools, such as news releases, direct mailings and newsletters, and informal personal contacts, such as telephone calls, are particularly important follow-up activities. They can help connect two formal consultation activities and help in communicating information on next steps and decisions. For advice and support in using public information tools, contact your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch. Also refer to the publication, ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

- *Public meetings* can convey results and decisions to a large number of people.
- *Open houses* can provide follow-up information in a format suitable for individual review.
- *Public advisory committees* and *monitoring committees* can act as vehicles for disseminating information on a decision throughout the community.
- *Targeted briefings* can convey follow-up information and decisions to a group or community with a special interest in the result, prior to making the information more widely available.



The following chart summarizes those activities that are generally suited to achieving each of the five categories of consultation needs that may arise in your consultation program.

DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM

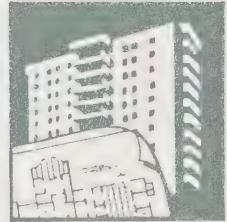
Chart: MATCHING ACTIVITIES TO NEEDS

	PROVIDING INFORMATION	UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC	DISCUSSING THE ISSUES	BUILDING CONSENSUS	ENSURING FOLLOW-UP
1. PUBLIC MEETING		●	●	●	●
2. OPEN HOUSE		●	●	●	●
3. WORKSHOP		●	●	●	●
4. PUBLIC ADVISORY/LIAISON COMMITTEE		●	●	●	●
5. DISCUSSION PAPER/CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS		●	●		
6. TOLL-FREE NUMBER		●	●		
7. TARGETED BRIEFING		●	●	●	●
8. PUBLIC SEMINAR		●	●	●	
9. SITE VISIT		●	●	●	
10. MONITORING COMMITTEE		●	●		●
11. FOCUS GROUP		●			
INFORMAL COMMUNICATION		●	●	●	●

Further Considerations

Once you have begun to develop a public consultation program and have selected particular activities, a number of factors remain to be considered. Contact your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch to inquire about the following matters:

- advertising (Communications Branch places all paid ads)
- production of displays
- production of handouts
- Ministry publications
- translation needs (oral or written)



What resources do you have available?

Public consultation takes time, effort and thought. Be sure to consider what access you have to resources within the Ministry, and think carefully about your budget. Make sure you have accounted for any costs associated with the following factors:

- meeting room or hall, including possible rental fee
- audio-visual equipment
- transportation (such as the availability of a Ministry vehicle)
- refreshments
- staff time and expertise
- travel expenses

How large is your audience?

Your consultation activities should be sensitive to audience size. Try to estimate how many people will be interested in participating, and plan your activity accordingly. If you have no idea how big your audience will be, make your activity as flexible as possible to accommodate people. If you are required by statute to hold a certain kind of activity, such as a public meeting, make sure you rent a room or hall large enough to accommodate all those persons who may have an interest in the issue.

How will your audience respond?

It is also important for your meetings to be held at a time convenient for your audience. For example, it would be difficult to convince farmers to attend a daylong workshop in the fall. Pay close attention to the season, time, and place of your activity in order to attract a large number of participants. Most importantly, become aware of how people in the particular community prefer to receive information, and plan your event accordingly.

How much time do you have to prepare?

Some activities take more time and effort to organize than others. Time-consuming items include the preparation of original materials, such as displays, workshop handouts or other audio-visual aids. Logistical arrangements such as advertising, room bookings and travel also take time. If your activity is going to be a success, it is essential to give participants adequate notice about the event. You will need to give at least two weeks to local media as well as to the public when organizing any event.

Contact the Communications Branch about advertising at least four weeks ahead of your scheduled activity. Advertisements usually run at least two weeks in advance of any event.

Putting these ideas to work:

Two Environment Ontario case studies

The ideas presented in this chapter are already at work in a range of public consultation programs developed by the Ministry. This section highlights two such programs, noting how different consultation activities are being used to meet particular needs and circumstances:

- ***ST. MARYS RIVER REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN***
- ***CONTROL ORDER under the Environmental Protection Act***

The two case studies provide a contrast in styles. The first is a long-term, community-based program involving a complex mix of consultation activities. The second is a short-term program with specific consultation activities required by statute.

**CASE STUDY #1:
ST. MARYS RIVER REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN**

Introduction:

The International Joint Commission has identified 42 'areas of concern' around the Great Lakes where remedial action is needed. A remedial action plan (RAP), is to be designed for each 'area of concern'. In each area, a joint federal-provincial technical RAP team is appointed. In the case of the St. Marys River RAP, the team consists of 12 members from Canada and the United States. The RAP team works with the public in writing a remedial action plan and oversees a public consultation program. A binational public advisory council (BPAC), representing a range of interests, works closely with the team.

The program is just getting underway. Here is a chronology of the major activities from the fall of 1987 to early 1989:

Fall 1987: Contact List

The first step in the public consultation program was to inform people about the RAP and the role of the public. A contact list was developed using attendance lists from a variety of public events. All RAP team members were asked to submit names of contacts, and these people, in turn, were asked to name others who they thought would be interested in the RAP program.

September 1987: Toll-Free Line

A toll-free RAP line was established so that people could inquire about the RAP program, and have an access point to express their views. The toll-free line allows people to leave a message with an answering service. Their calls are promptly returned.

December 1987: Letter of Introduction

A letter of introduction was sent to all of the people on the contact list. It explained the purpose of the RAP, and informed them that public information sessions were being planned.

January 1988: Notification

A flyer was sent out to all the people on the contact list indicating where and when the public information sessions would be held. A public involvement



co-ordinator, who had been hired to assist the RAP team, made 80 telephone calls to remind people about the sessions.

January-February 1988: Preparations

Advertising for the public information sessions began two weeks before the sessions. Newspaper advertisements were placed in Wednesday and Saturday issues for two weeks, as well as on the day before the session. The ads were placed in English- and French-language daily and weekly papers. A media package that included a public service announcement and a news release was circulated to 15 radio and television stations.

February 1988: The Sessions

A public information session was held on each side of the St. Marys River. At the sessions, a binational public advisory council (BPAC) was proposed. Questionnaires were distributed to gather comments about the public involvement program and people's concerns about the water quality in the river. People were also invited to suggest alternative forms of consultation. Results of the questionnaires showed that people were in favour of a BPAC. The RAP team accepted the recommendation. An evaluation form was also distributed so people could comment on the meeting itself.

February 1988: Report

A follow-up report on the February meeting was sent to all of the people who had completed questionnaires or evaluation sheets.

March-April 1988: Display Booth

A display booth was set up at a Sportsman's show in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and at a home show in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The RAP team distributed handouts and had a sign-up sheet for the mailing list. The emphasis of the display was on getting information out to the public and on gaining support for the RAP program.

May 1988: Follow-up Letter

An follow-up letter was sent to all people on the contact list. The letter described the RAP team's activities, outlined the role of the BPAC and announced an upcoming public meeting.

June 1988: Public Meeting

At a public meeting, a detailed technical presentation was made on point sources of pollution. The presentation included a video focusing on the problems in the St. Marys River, and the need for a remedial action plan. (The video has been made available to other groups for educational purposes.) Formal nominations for BPAC membership were called for and accepted. Questionnaires and evaluation sheets were also distributed at this meeting.

June 1988: Call for Nominations

As a follow-up to the public meeting, the call for BPAC membership nominations was sent to people on the contact list.

September - October 1988: Establishing the BPAC

A 37-member BPAC, representing interested groups in Canada and the United States, was established. Some people were named as 'alternates' and can fill in for members unable to attend a meeting.

October 1988: Announcement of Membership

Local newspapers were sent the BPAC membership list as well as information on the council's first meeting.

November 1988: First BPAC Meeting

The first BPAC meeting clarified administrative and procedural matters. It was decided that BPAC meetings will be held every 4 to 8 weeks, alternating between Canada and the United States. General public meetings will be held every 4 to 6 months. Public meetings will ensure that the BPAC and RAP team regularly consult the general public.

Following every BPAC meeting, minutes and the agenda for the next meeting are distributed.

January 1989: Newsletter

The RAP program's first newsletter was issued. The newsletter will keep people informed about the progress of the work of the RAP team and BPAC, and will profile key issues and reports.

CASE STUDY #2: CONTROL ORDER

Introduction

A control order is usually used to rectify pollution problems that are complex and cannot be solved by operational changes alone. It is usually designed to deal with a broad range of environmental problems, such as the discharge of toxic chemicals, and is intended to address all 'media' (such as air, surface water and groundwater). In developing a control order for a major industry, there is frequently a two-stage public consultation process, with an open house and a public meeting.



Consider a small town in northern Ontario, where the main industry is a pulp mill. Environment Ontario is concerned about the environmental impacts of the mill, and decides to issue a control order. In developing the control order, three major parties will be involved: Ministry regional staff, the pulp and paper company, and the public.

Provincial Officer's Report:

Discussions with the company

As a statutory requirement, Ministry staff prepare a Provincial Officer's Report. The report documents and provides an analysis of environmental problems that need to be addressed. Using the report, Ministry staff begin discussing alternative solutions with the company, and the timing for their implementation. If additional studies are required to identify the cause of a problem, these studies may become a requirement of the control order.

Providing information to the public

The Provincial Officer's Report is made available to the public and is sent to the municipality.

Discussion with other interested groups and individuals

While dealing with the company, Ministry staff also seek out other interested groups, such as the local municipality, other provincial government agencies and the Medical Officer of Health. At this point, there is no direct contact between the company and these groups. Ministry staff may raise community concerns with the company.

Advertising the Open House and Public Meeting

The open house and public meeting are advertised together. The public meeting is usually held within a week of the open house, and at the same location. The open house is held twice in the same day (afternoon and evening). The Ministry places English- and French-language advertisements in local and area newspapers, and contacts radio stations.

Making information available

In advance of or at the open house, the Ministry provides information packages to the media, municipalities and other interest parties. The packages are also available at central locations such as public libraries, and include a draft control order developed on the basis of discussions between the Ministry and the Company. Detailed background documents are also available.

The Open House: providing information

The open house is a joint venture between the Ministry and the company. At the open house, people are provided with the information that has been gathered concerning the environmental problems, the remedial measures planned and the anticipated environmental benefits. Drawings and aerial photographs are displayed showing the location of the existing industrial complex, proposed facilities and other technical features.

Formal presentations are not usually made at the open house. Instead, the activity emphasizes one-on-one discussion. Ministry staff will attend the open house, and talk to the draft control order as a first cut at addressing the problems. The draft order represents a possible set of solutions, but may still be changed based on additional public consultation.

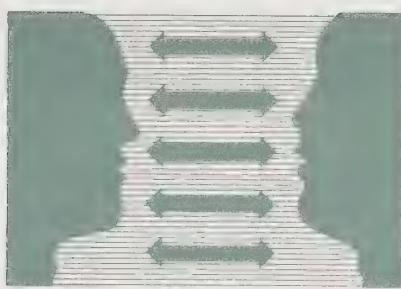
The Public Meeting: understanding concerns

The Ministry holds a public meeting to hear people's comments and concerns about the draft control order. The meeting is often chaired by a local person who is respected in the community, and is known to be independent of the major interests represented at the meeting. (Prior to the meeting, Ministry staff will brief the chairperson on the issues.) The chairperson must ensure procedural fairness at the meeting.

The meeting begins with a statement by the Ministry's regional director. The statement is followed by a more detailed presentation by Ministry staff on the nature of the problems and the alternative solutions. On behalf of the company, consultants discuss the specifics of the solutions proposed in the draft control order. After these presentations, the floor will be open for questions and for people to provide their suggestions.

Follow-up

People usually have 15 working days following the public meeting to submit written comments. The draft order is revised on the basis of these comments. At the end of this period, the director issues a Notice of Intention to serve the order, after which the company has, by statute, 15 days to object. When the control order is served, a news release is issued. The news release addresses any changes in the control order made as a result of public consultations. Copies of the control order and news release are sent to everyone who submitted written comments.



V BUILDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Developing your public consultation program is the first step. Implementing your program requires good communication skills. This chapter provides some suggestions for improving your communication skills.

Effective communication takes commitment, but help is available, and your efforts will be rewarded.

There are four general kinds of communication skills that are key to good public consultation:

1. Making an Oral Presentation
2. Chairing a Meeting
3. Answering Questions
4. Dealing with People

1. *Making an Oral Presentation*

Be prepared. Organize your material. Practice your speech. Concentrate on skills that will improve your delivery.

Organization

- Organize your material carefully and logically. Provide cues throughout your speech to remind the audience of the sequence you are following. For example:

“Today I want to explain the three major challenges to establishing an effective recycling program. These are: . . . “From my discussion of this first challenge, you will conclude that a great deal of co-operation is required to meet it. Let’s move on to discuss the second challenge.”
- Be aware of your time constraints, and do not try to cover too much material. Be realistic about what your audience can absorb.



- Do not overwhelm your audience with a lot of numbers or statistics. Use statistics sparingly, and keep in mind the point you are making is more important than the numbers themselves. Compare:

“33,451 people in the community, or 66.9% are in favour of the project.”

and

“Two-thirds of community members are in favour of the project.”

- Put your notes on small index cards, and turn them over as you cover each point. This will enable you to glance quickly at your next point, without having to search for your place on a page.

Practice

- Time your speech and cut it down if it is too long.
- Practise your speech in front of people who are not familiar with the topic; they will be a good judge of how easy your presentation is to understand.
- Practise your speech until it becomes familiar. The more familiar you are with it, the more relaxed you will be when you address your audience.
- Practise your speech using any visual aids or equipment you intend to use at the presentation. Even the simplest equipment may cause you problems when you are trying to concentrate on your delivery. For example, if you decide to use an overhead projector, practise putting the transparencies on the projector as you speak. Tab your overheads so you know which way to put them on the screen.
- If you are going to point out specific things on the overhead, do not point to them on the slide itself. The image of your hand will be magnified on the screen, and any movement of your hand will be distracting to the audience. Instead, approach the screen and use a pointer. This will enable the audience to pay attention to you and the information on the screen.

Delivery

- The best speech is one given extemporaneously. That is, do not read from a script, but use brief notes. This will enable you to interact with your audience, and give a more interesting presentation.
- Speak clearly and slowly.
- Make eye contact with your audience.
- Project your voice, and make sure everyone can hear you.

- Speak about your topic with interest and enthusiasm (if you look bored, then your audience will wonder why they should care).
- Be as expressive as possible, without appearing phoney or unnatural.
- Try not to use acronyms. If you must, explain what they stand for so everyone understands them.
- Avoid technical terminology. If you must use a technical term, define it clearly.
- Avoid jargon.
- As you speak, try and note how your audience is reacting. Good observation and active listening will help you respond more effectively to the audience's concerns.
"I see some people shaking their heads. Let me go over that point again."
- Use overheads sparingly, and only if you are comfortable with them. Consider using conventional slides, instead.
- Consider preparing handouts that summarize or complement your presentation, whether or not you are using overheads. You may want to distribute the handouts before your presentation if the material is detailed and you want people to follow along closely, or after so that people will not be reading them as you speak.

2 Chairing a Meeting

In preparing to chair a meeting, make sure you have the following materials and information:

- Statement of the purpose of the meeting
- Proposed agenda
- Proposed rules of order
- List of the names of speakers and others you will be introducing



At the meeting, remember that your role is to oversee the procedural operation of the meeting. As chairperson you should remain impartial, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and debate by maintaining order and fairness.

Here are some tips:

- Welcome participants as they arrive. Be sure to identify yourself and wear a name tag.
- Start the meeting on time or explain delays.
"It is eight o'clock, but we will wait just a few minutes longer as some people will have been delayed by the snowstorm."
- Introduce yourself first, and explain your role as chairperson.
- Explain the "house rules" (for example, that no smoking is permitted in the meeting room; where and when people may help themselves to coffee, the location of washrooms, and when they can expect to break for any meals).
- Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Introduce speakers, Ministry staff and special guests.
- Table the agenda.
- For small groups it may be helpful to have a short discussion regarding the agenda (though this is not advisable in a large group).
- If someone introduces a topic clearly beyond the scope of the agenda, politely recognize the validity of the concern, but point out that it is not the purpose of the meeting to address such a topic. If appropriate, invite them to speak with you after the meeting. On the other hand, if the question is simple and short, answer it.
- If discussion is good, but seems to be moving away from the agenda, check with the audience to see if they want to pursue the discussion in process, or move back to the original agenda.
"This is an excellent discussion, but we have moved away from our central task. Shall we move back to the main topic, or would you like to spend a few more minutes on this discussion?"
- Use good judgment in enforcing rules.
- If angry participants persist in interrupting or changing the topic, let them get the issue on the table, but if they carry on for a long time, check back with your audience to see if people want to continue the discussion.
- Help participants to clarify their statements. Try to convey that it is you having difficulty understanding, not them having difficulty explaining.
"If I understand you correctly . . ."

OR

"If I am not mistaken, you are saying . . . am I correct?"

- Re-state all decisions made at the meeting to ensure that everyone is clear on them and agrees to the wording.
- If time runs out and there are still a lot of questions, indicate what opportunities people will have to pursue their concerns.
"It is getting very late, and I am afraid we must end this part of the meeting. I realize there are still some questions. If you would like to stay awhile after the meeting, we would be pleased to answer them."
- In closing the meeting, thank people for attending and participating. Indicate that their comments and suggestions have been valuable. Inform them of the next steps or activities planned for the public consultation process.

3 Answering Questions

There is an art to responding to questions. Here are some helpful suggestions:



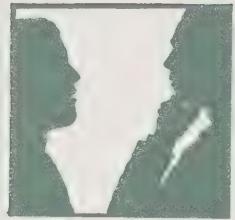
- Try to anticipate questions and have staff available who are qualified to answer.
- Have someone keep track of the order in which people raise their hands with a question.
"I believe you had your hand up first. Then you at the back will be next, and then the person here on the right. Thank you."
- After you have heard and understood the question, repeat it clearly so that everyone in the room can hear it. (People who do not hear or understand the question may become disinterested and begin to chat among themselves.)
- If you do not understand the question, ask the questioner to clarify it.
"I am not sure I understand your question. Could you repeat it, please?"
- If the question is irrelevant or off-topic, there are several ways you might handle it. If the question requires a short answer, then respond to it and quickly move on to the next question. If the question requires a detailed answer, then ask if you can respond to it after the meeting. If the person persists, then explain that while this is not the right forum to deal with it, you will respond if the audience has no objection.

- If you are not sure of the answer to a question, say so. People will respect your honesty.

"I am sorry, but I don't know the answer. We will make a note of your question and get back to you. Please give us your name and telephone number later, so that we can call you. Thank you."

4. Dealing with People

Before, during, and after public consultation activities, you will be speaking directly with people, in either a group setting, such as at a public meeting, or on a one-to-one basis, as in an open house or during a break in a public meeting. Here are some guidelines on key interpersonal communication skills useful in such situations:



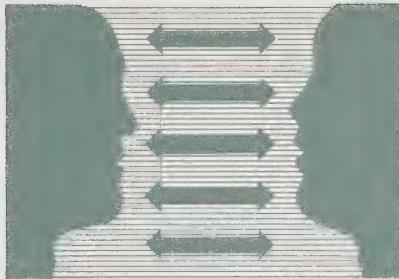
- Listen carefully to questions and comments.
- Answer any questions.

Avoid:

Q. How long will that landfill liner last?

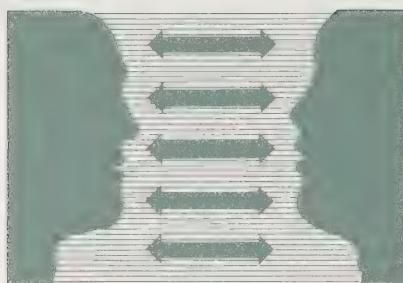
A. This landfill liner is made of . . These are used throughout the province and their performance has been entirely satisfactory.

- Be perceptive. If the person appears to know very little about the project, or if they admit outright that they are confused, take the time to explain what you are talking about.
- Alternatively, if the person appears well-informed, and asks a specific question, do not burden them with basic information.
- Recognize and accept that there are other points of view. Be receptive to new ideas and comments.
- Do not focus on opinions, focus on issues, problems, and alternatives; remember that you are representing the Ministry.
- Do not be judgmental or take sides in an argument.
"What we're seeing here is an example of how difficult this issue is."
- If people want to blow off steam, let them. If you listen carefully, and sympathetically, without being defensive, people will usually calm down.



VI MAKING IT WORK: 10 PRINCIPLES

1. **Take the initiative.** Public consultation is a permanent part of the Ministry's decision-making process. Anticipate the need for consultation. Make use of informal channels of communication.
2. **Be flexible.** Be willing to adjust the public consultation program to meet unforeseen developments. Listen and respond to the needs, concerns and suggestions of others.
3. **Communicate clearly.** Make sure the purposes and the consultation processes are clearly understood by all participants. Throughout the program, check frequently to ensure these are kept in mind.
4. **Set clear limits.** Clarify the objectives and scope of your consultation process at the beginning. All participants should understand which issues are open for discussion and where there is opportunity to influence decisions.
5. **Show respect.** Consultation should be carried out objectively, openly and responsibly. Remember that people are experts on their own values and community situation, and many have specialized knowledge and skills applicable to environmental issues.
6. **Make the most of your limited resources.** Public consultation requires careful thought, planning and preparation, but time and resources are always limited. Be aware of your constraints and make the most of the resources you have.
7. **Emphasize consensus-building.** Recognize that conflict, tensions and anxiety over environmental issues are inevitable. Focus on understanding the sources of conflict. Neither deny nor ignore conflict, but seek to overcome it to arrive at a consensus.
8. **Take responsibility.** Whether or not you hire outside expertise, you are responsible for running the program. Take advantage of opportunities to improve your consultation and communications skills. Help is available.
9. **Evaluate your performance.** Make evaluation a major element of your consultation program. Check with participants to see if their needs are being met. Remember that self-evaluation is an important part of any program.
10. **Always follow up.** Follow-up is a critical component of the program. Following up on questions, fulfilling commitments to provide more information, and informing the public of the Ministry's decisions are all important.



VII WHERE TO FIND HELP

Developing and implementing a good public consultation program demand ideas, skills and resources. The Ministry's Communications Branch can help you with all three. Throughout this Guide, there are many references to checking with your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch. Your co-ordinator will work closely with you to determine your needs and communications budget, and will recommend the best approaches to take. Then your co-ordinator will put you in touch with people who can meet your needs and will supervise the Communications Branch's involvement in helping you implement your consultation program.

To summarize, here are the major areas where your Project Co-ordinator can help:

- Developing a program and selecting activities
- Advertising
- Organizing events and exhibits
- Preparing brochures, posters and other written material
- Producing or locating videos and other audio-visual material
- Writing speeches and news releases
- Media relations
- Training on media relations and public consultation
- Locating outside sources of assistance (such as in other ministries and public interest groups)

Here are the names and numbers of staff in the Communications Branch who can help you:

Project Co-ordinators:

For: • air resources
• investigation and enforcement
• SAC
• Lab
• hazardous contaminants
• environmental assessment
• farm program
• West Central Region
• Northeastern Region
• Northwestern Region

Call: ***JOHN STEELE 323-4337***

For: • project engineering
• environmental approvals and land use planning
• water resources
• intergovernmental relations and strategic projects
• Central Region
• Southeastern Region
• Southwestern Region

Call: ***GINNY WHITTEN-DAY 323-4348***

For: Waste Management
Call: ***MORRIS ILYNIAK 323-4650***

For: Acid rain
Call: ***GERRY MERCHANT 323-4333***

For: MISA
Call: ***FRANK GIORNO 323-4648***

Manager, Public Information and Consultation:
DAVID EVANS 323-4571

Environment Ontario's Public Information Centre:
(for Ministry publications and catalogue):
Main Floor, 135 St. Clair Ave. W.,
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5 (416) 323-4321

Training

Training to improve your public consultation management and communication skills is available with both the Ministry and the Ontario government.

The Ministry's **Corporate Training Program** and the Ontario government's **Human Resources Secretariat** both offer a wide range of management, communications and other training courses. Here is a sample of the courses available.

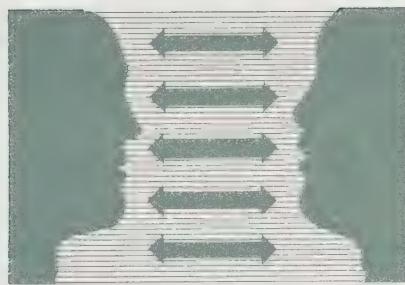
The **Corporate Training Program** includes courses such as:

- “Dealing with the Public”
- “Meetings for Results”
- “Communication Skills Workshop”
- “Speak for Success”
- “Writing Skills for Technical Staff”

The **Human Resources Secretariat** offers such training as:

- “Effective Briefings and Presentations”
- “Team Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness”
- “Think on Your Feet”
- “Management Skills”
- “Consulting Skills Workshop”
- “Meetings for Results”
- “Communication/Interpersonal Skills”
- “Assertive Communication”
- “Written Communication Programs”
- “Writing Essentials for Managers”
- “Presentation Skills”

For more information on these training programs, contact the Ministry's **Human Resources Branch**.

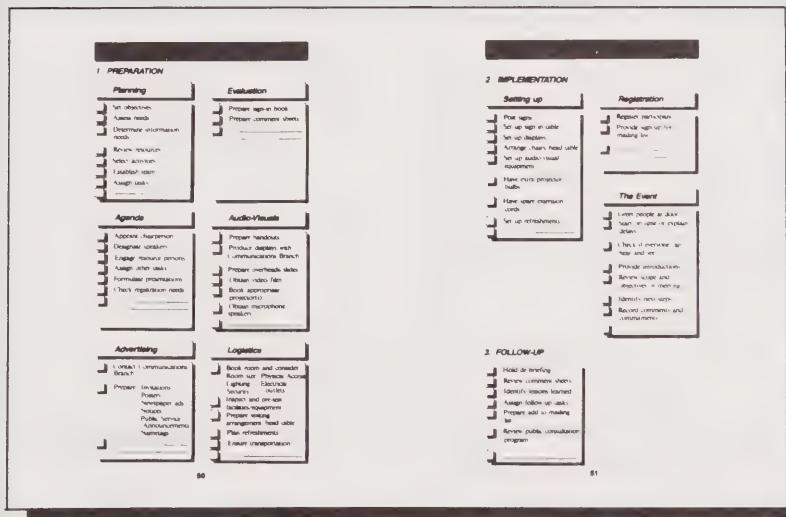


VIII THE CHECKLIST

This chapter provides a checklist summarizing the major steps relevant to most public consultation activities. The **RESOURCE KIT** includes a pad of checklists to use in your public consultation program.

There are three major groups of tasks in the checklist:

- 1. PREPARATION**
- 2. IMPLEMENTATION**
- 3. FOLLOW-UP**



CHECKLIST

1. PREPARATION

Planning

- Set objectives
- Assess needs
- Determine information needs
- Review resources
- Select activities
- Establish team
- Assign tasks

Evaluation

- Prepare sign-in book
- Prepare comment sheets

Agenda

- Appoint chairperson
- Designate speakers
- Engage resource persons
- Assign other tasks
- Formulate presentations
- Check registration needs

Audio-Visuals

- Prepare handouts
- Produce displays with Communications Branch
- Prepare overheads/slides
- Obtain video/film
- Book appropriate projector(s)
- Obtain microphone/speakers

Advertising

- Contact Communications Branch
- Prepare: Invitations
Posters
Newspaper ads
Notices
Public Service Announcements
Nametags

Logistics

- Book room and consider:
Room size Physical Access
Lighting Electrical
Security outlets
- Inspect and pre-test facilities/equipment
- Prepare seating arrangement/head table
- Plan refreshments
- Ensure transportation

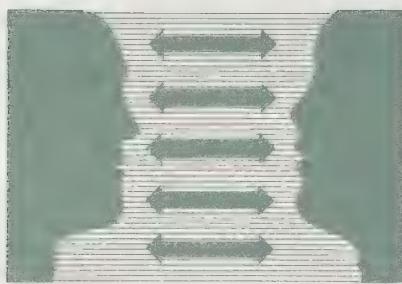
CHECKLIST

2. IMPLEMENTATION

<i>Setting up</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>The Event</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Post signs<input type="checkbox"/> Set up sign-in table<input type="checkbox"/> Set up displays<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange chairs/head table<input type="checkbox"/> Set up audio-visual equipment<input type="checkbox"/> Have extra projector bulbs<input type="checkbox"/> Have spare extension cords<input type="checkbox"/> Set up refreshments <hr/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Register participants<input type="checkbox"/> Provide sign-up for mailing list <hr/> <hr/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Greet people at door<input type="checkbox"/> Start on time or explain delays<input type="checkbox"/> Check if everyone can hear and see<input type="checkbox"/> Provide introductions<input type="checkbox"/> Review scope and objectives of meeting<input type="checkbox"/> Identify next steps<input type="checkbox"/> Record comments and commitments <hr/>

3. FOLLOW-UP

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Hold de-briefing<input type="checkbox"/> Review comment sheets<input type="checkbox"/> Identify lessons learned<input type="checkbox"/> Assign follow-up tasks<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare/add to mailing list<input type="checkbox"/> Review public consultation program <hr/>



IX A FINAL WORD

Have You Conducted a Good Public Consultation Program?

Planning and carrying out a public consultation program can be a challenging and rewarding task, taking many months and involving many activities. How do you know if your public consultation program has been a good one?

Do not judge the program's success on whether:

- It was easy or difficult.
- It lasted a short time or a long time.
- It was inexpensive or expensive.
- There was no controversy or a great deal of controversy.
- There were few activities or many activities.
- Few people participated or many people participated.

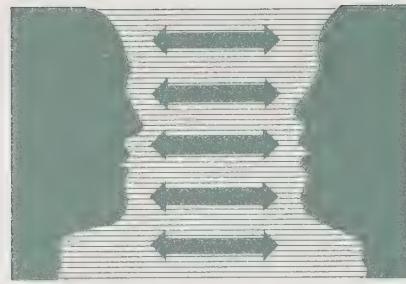
Instead, ask yourself:

- Did your program inform and provide access to anyone who might want to be consulted, as well as those you needed to consult?
- Did you use activities that allowed people to be consulted in a way that met their needs?
- Did the people you needed to consult participate?
- Did the final decision or recommendations take into account what people said?
- Did you inform people of the final decision?
- Did people understand the final decision?

If you can answer "yes" to these questions, then your public consultation program was a good one.

Remember:

1. The Ministry is committed to full, open and active public consultation on its programs and policies.
2. There is a wide range of consultation activities available. Develop your consultation program by choosing the appropriate activity to match your audience, issue, consultation objectives, and stage of development of the issue. Use public information tools and informal contacts to link specific activities.
3. The Communications Branch will assist you in preparing your program, by providing advice, support materials, training and resource people.
4. Your commitment and positive attitude will make for a good public consultation program.
5. An investment of time and effort in a good public consultation program will result in better decisions, and more efficient and effective program implementation.

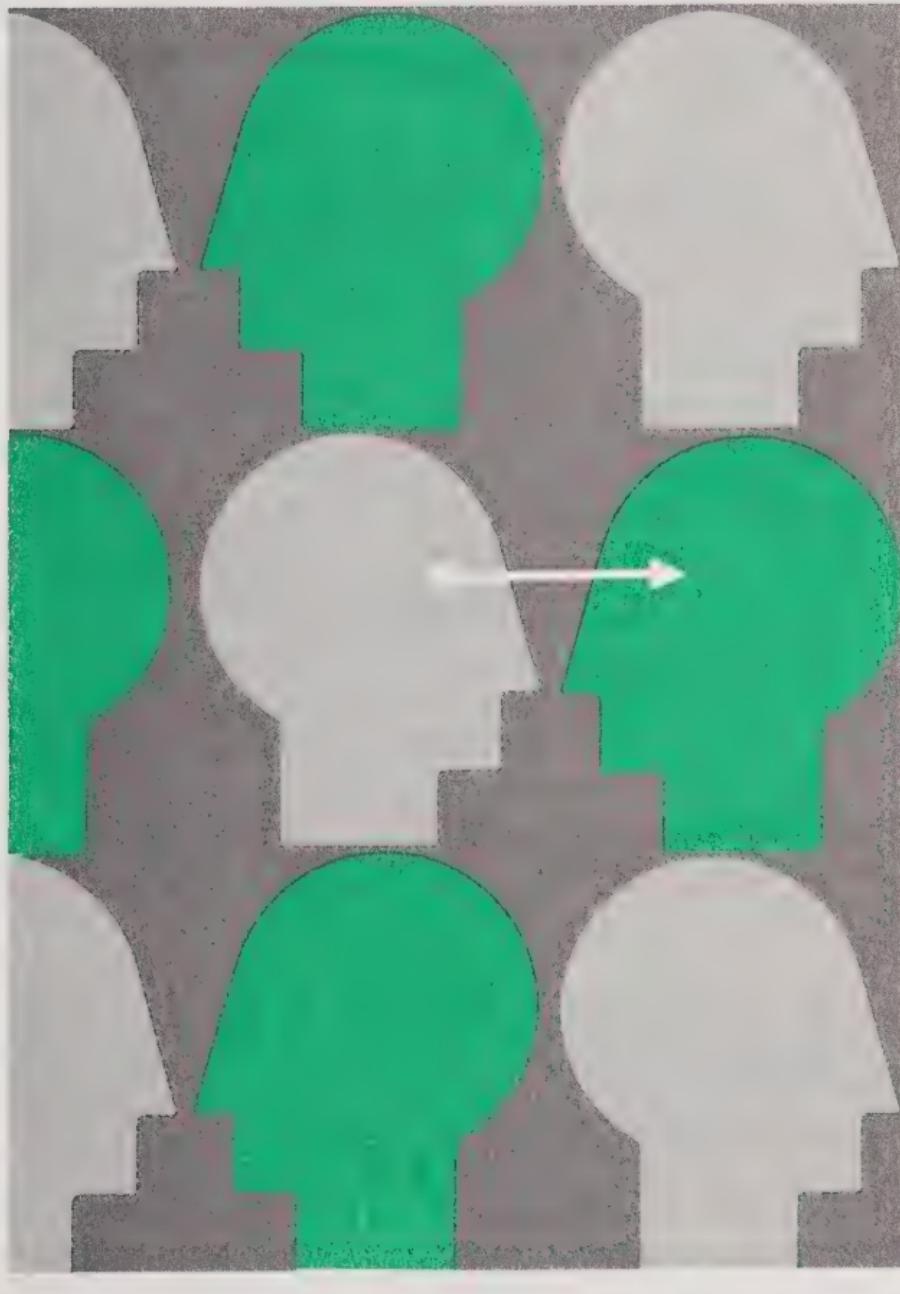


NOTES

CAZON
EV

Government
Publications

POLICY ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION



*Working together
for a better environment*



Environment
Ontario

Jim Bradley, Minister

POLICY ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Protecting the environment is everybody's concern!

Environment Ontario now has a comprehensive public consultation policy that embodies the government's commitment to involving the public in the environmental planning process. The policy affords new and expanded opportunities for public involvement in the review and development of the ministry's environmental protection programs.

What is public consultation?

Public consultation is an interactive, or two-way, process. Working together, we all become better informed about, and help resolve, environmental issues. Consultation affords people the opportunity to have an influence on the decision-making process.

Environment Ontario consults the public through:

- local community liaison committees
- public meetings
- discussion papers
- symposia
- informal contacts with ministry staff
- formal public hearings
- advisory committees

7 - 2001

PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

In order to establish a sound basis for Environment Ontario's public consultation practices, the new policy promotes five central principles:

- 1.** Consensus building will be emphasized.
- 2.** The consultation process will be objective, open, fair, and carried out in a responsible manner.
- 3.** People will be told how and when they can participate in the consultation process.
- 4.** The results of public consultation will be incorporated in decision-making.
- 5.** Participants will be informed as to how their involvement affected the ministry's decisions.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Over the years, Environment Ontario has consulted the public on many issues. In order to strengthen and broaden the ministry's commitment to continuing consultation, Environment Ontario's new policy highlights 10 areas of activity that will now include public consultation.

- 1.** Where major programs are envisaged, public consultation will take place during the planning of new environmental programs. When current programs are to be updated, the public also will be consulted.
- 2.** Public consultation on new and amended legislation now occurs in the provincial legislature. The ministry's policy, while affirming that the present process is the primary means of consultation on environmental legislation, specifies that the ministry may choose to consult the public before a bill is introduced in Queen's Park.

- 3.** Public consultation may also take place in situations where the ministry makes regulations to enforce its environmental responsibilities. Such regulations are promulgated under the *Environmental Protection Act*, the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Ontario Water Resources Act*, and the *Pesticides Act*.
- 4.** The ministry is responsible for establishing environmental standards and guidelines for contaminants in order to protect public health and the environment. The public will play an important consultative role in the setting of these standards and guidelines.
- 5.** Policies likely to be of interest to the public will be adopted and implemented at first on an interim basis for six months. The public will be notified of such policies, provided with copies upon request, and invited to submit written comments on the policies.
- 6.** Any business or industry whose operations have an impact on the environment requires a certificate of approval from the ministry. Since potential effects to the public must be considered before such a certificate is granted, the public will be consulted on proposals having significant environmental impact.
- 7.** When preparing environmental assessments or exemption requests for its own projects, the ministry will consult with affected or interested parties in the same way that other project proponents are required.
- 8.** When actual or potential environmental problems arise or regulations are contravened, the ministry must establish abatement or cleanup requirements. The policy provides for public consultation on any abatement requirements in the development of an abatement program.

9. Closed industrial facilities must be cleaned up in order to make these sites safe for future use. The ministry sometimes assumes responsibility for this cleanup or site decommissioning. In such cases, the ministry will consult the public in these activities. In cases where non-ministry personnel are responsible for decommissioning a site, the policy encourages them to undertake public consultation.

10. The ministry plays a role in responding to emergencies and spills which threaten human health and the environment. The public will be notified promptly of the ministry's actions in such situations and consulted on any continuing cleanup following the emergency.

The ministry, recognizing the need to provide expertise and assistance to staff in delivering this policy, created within the Communications Branch the Public Consultation Section. This section is responsible for assisting staff in planning good public consultation programs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY

Visit your local office of the ministry, or contact Environment Ontario's Policy and Planning Branch (416) 323-4554 regarding detailed inquiries about the nature of the policy.

 Environment
Ontario

Jim Bradley, Minister



POLITIQUE DE CONSULTATION DU PUBLIC



*Assainissons ensemble
notre environnement*



**Environnement
Ontario**

Jim Bradley, ministre

POLITIQUE DE CONSULTATION DU PUBLIC

La protection de l'environnement, c'est l'affaire de tous!

Environnement Ontario, soucieux de donner corps à l'engagement pris par le gouvernement, s'est doté d'une nouvelle politique de consultation du public. Celle-ci permettra au public de contribuer réellement à la planification de l'environnement et de participer beaucoup plus à l'examen et à l'élaboration des programmes de protection de l'environnement.

Qu'est-ce que la consultation du public?

Il s'agit d'un processus d'échange entre le Ministère et le public. Ensemble, les deux parties seront mieux renseignées sur les questions de l'heure, qu'elles pourront régler en collaboration. La consultation donnera par ailleurs au public l'occasion de participer à la prise de décision.

Environnement Ontario consulte le public par divers moyens:

- comités de liaison communautaires
- réunions publiques
- documents de travail
- symposiums
- rapports informels avec le personnel
- audiences publiques
- comités consultatifs

PRINCIPES D'ACTION

Pour que les activités de consultation reposent sur des bases solides, la nouvelle politique sera animée par cinq grands principes:

- 1.** On recherchera avant tout la formation d'un consensus.
- 2.** Le processus de consultation sera mené de façon objective, ouverte, juste et responsable.
- 3.** Le public saura de quelle manière et à quel moment il pourra participer au processus.
- 4.** Les résultats de la consultation seront intégrés à la prise de décision.
- 5.** Les participants seront informés de la façon dont le Ministère a tenu compte de leurs interventions.

SECTEURS D'ACTIVITÉ

Au fil des ans, Environnement Ontario a consulté le public sur de nombreuses questions. De manière à renforcer et à élargir son apport, le public sera désormais consulté sur dix grands secteurs d'activité dans le cadre de la nouvelle politique.

- 1.** Quand le Ministère envisagera de nouveaux programmes de grande envergure, il consultera le public à l'étape de la planification. S'il souhaite modifier un programme existant, il consultera aussi le public.
- 2.** La consultation du public sur l'adoption de nouvelles lois ou la modification de lois existantes se fait déjà à l'Assemblée législative. Le Ministère, tout en admettant que la méthode en vigueur doive rester le principal moyen de consultation sur les lois relatives à la protection de l'environnement, pourra consulter le public avant qu'un projet de loi ne soit déposé à Queen's Park.

3. Le Ministère peut également consulter le public quand il songe à adopter des règlements pour l'aider à s'acquitter de ses responsabilités. Ces règlements sont pris en application de la *Loi sur la protection de l'environnement*, de la *Loi sur les évaluations environnementales*, de la *Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario* et de la *Loi sur les pesticides*.

4. Le Ministère est chargé d'établir des normes environnementales pour les polluants afin de protéger la santé publique et l'environnement. Le public jouera un rôle consultatif important dans l'établissement de ces normes.

5. Les politiques de nature à intéresser le public seront adoptées et mises en oeuvre pour une période de six mois. Le public sera mis au fait de leur contenu, pourra en recevoir une copie sur demande et sera invité à faire parvenir ses observations à leur sujet par écrit.

6. Toute entreprise ou industrie dont l'activité a des répercussions sur l'environnement doit obtenir un certificat d'autorisation du Ministère. Comme il faut tenir compte des effets éventuels sur le public avant de délivrer un certificat, le Ministère consultera le public au sujet des propositions qui ont d'importantes répercussions sur l'environnement.

7. Quand le Ministère entreprendra une évaluation environnementale ou demandera une exemption à l'égard d'un de ses projets, il consultera les parties touchées ou intéressées au même titre que les autres promoteurs.

8. Quand une situation dégrade ou risque de dégrader l'environnement ou que les règlements du Ministère sont violés, il faut imposer des mesures de dépollution ou de nettoyage. En vertu de la nouvelle politique, le public se verra consulté sur celles-ci au moment de l'élaboration du programme de dépollution.

9. Quiconque songe à fermer des installations industrielles est tenu de les nettoyer afin qu'elles ne posent pas de danger à leurs futurs utilisateurs. Le Ministère se charge parfois du nettoyage ou de la désaffection du lieu. Dans ces situations, il consultera le public à propos de ces activités. Si la désaffection est effectuée par d'autres, il les incite eux aussi à consulter le public.

10. Le Ministère doit intervenir en cas de situation d'urgence ou de déversement accidentel susceptible de menacer la santé humaine et l'environnement. Le public sera avisé sans délai des mesures qu'il adopte alors le Ministère et il sera aussi consulté au sujet des travaux de nettoyage qu'il entreprend par la suite, le cas échéant.

Le Ministère a créé la Section de la consultation du public au sein de la Direction des communications. Cette section aura pour fonction d'aider le personnel, par ses connaissances, à mettre en œuvre la politique et à faire en sorte que les programmes de consultation du public soient efficaces.

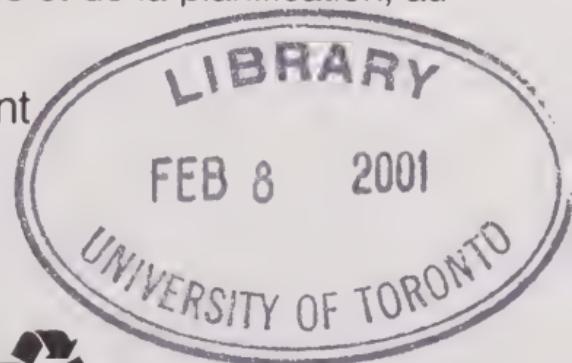
RENSEIGNEMENTS COMPLÉMENTAIRES SUR LA POLITIQUE

Pour tous renseignements, consulter le bureau d'Environnement Ontario le plus proche ou, s'il s'agit de questions détaillées sur sa nature, la Direction des politiques et de la planification, au (416) 323-4554.



**Environnement
Ontario**

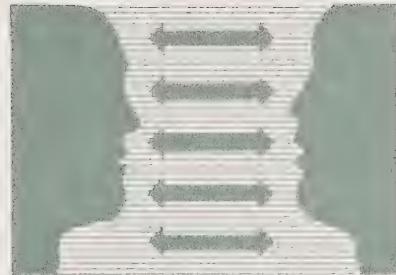
Jim Bradley, ministre



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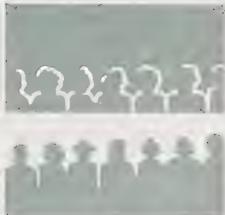
ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION HANDBOOK



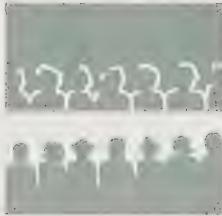
Environment
Ontario





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IS A PUBLIC COMMITTEE FOR YOU?

A public committee allows you to involve people or representatives of interests in a formal manner to directly address a problem or develop a plan. More than any other consultation activity, a public committee allows individual members of the public to play a strong advisory role.

Committee members may be appointed by the Minister, or nominated and elected by public groups or by the general public.

Committees meet regularly with Ministry staff to provide input and advice throughout the duration of the problem or task. As the representative of the Ministry, your role may range from being an active member, to serving as a resource and liaison person, to chairing the committee.

Public committees require and encourage active, on-going two-way communication between the community and the Ministry. They serve as the vehicle for coordinating and conveying people's concerns. As well, they are important for disseminating information, developing possible solutions, building consensus, and proposing new directions.

There are three kinds of public committees that can be used as part of your consultation program:

- **Public Advisory Committees** typically deal with plans and developing policies related to complex and lengthy environmental problems.
- **Public Liaison Committees** are frequently organized at a local level to address a site-specific concern.

- **Monitoring Committees** focus more on the implementation phase of a project, assuming a “watchdog” function to ensure that decisions are being acted upon. Like liaison committees, monitoring committees are typically established at a local, or even neighbourhood level. They are sometimes called implementation committees.

A public committee can help you meet four kinds of public consultation objectives:

- **Understanding the public**

You can work with a wide range of public views within a problem-solving format, and gain detailed insight into people's reactions to specific proposals.



- **Discussing the issues**

Committees enable knowledgeable members, representing different perspectives, to discuss, in detail, problems and projects over an extended period of time.



- **Building consensus**

Public committees offer the basis for consensus-building. Members are chosen to represent a range of perspectives to address a common task. They work together to establish a rapport for resolving differences or ensuring action.



- **Ensuring follow-up**

Public committees can advise you how best to communicate with other people in the community. They can also serve as credible and visible forums for disseminating, throughout the community, information on next steps or the final decision.





SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are three key factors to consider when establishing a public committee:

1. Define an achievable task.

If you are to engage the interest and enthusiasm of people, the committee's task must be recognized as both achievable and significant. People lose interest in committees that "don't do anything."



You may not need a committee if the problem at hand is narrow in scope or needs immediate attention. On the other hand, an overly complex and lengthy undertaking, one that appears to be never-ending, may discourage active participation by the people you need on your committee.

Clearly outline the objective of the committee's work, the scope of its powers, and its expected timeframe of operation.

2. Actively manage the public committee process.

Maintain an active role in the operation of the committee. Managing the committee does not mean controlling it. Rather, you want to keep committee members directed at the goal of the exercise. This includes informing them regularly about the Ministry's perspectives and policies.

3. Keep your public informed.

Your committee should be only part of your public consultation program. Resist the temptation to rely solely on your committee to represent "the public". The committee is frequently the starting point to encourage wider public interest in and additional input into the decision-making process.

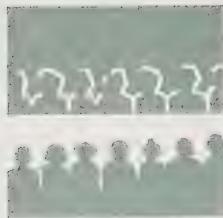
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ensure that the public is kept informed and the committee held accountable at all stages of the committee's work.

All committee meetings should be open to the public.

Use informal communication approaches, such as regular telephone calls and "coffee shop" discussions, to take what happens in the committee out into the community.

Ministry senior management is also part of your public. Keep management informed of the committee's work.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE

Step 1: Understand Your Objectives and Develop Terms of Reference

Use the ideas and guidelines in **THE GUIDE** to make sure that an advisory, liaison or monitoring committee meets your program's needs. Develop a workplan.

Your first major task will be developing terms of reference for the committee. You must consider such questions as:

- What is the nature of the problem? Can it be clearly defined? Is it a visible or recognized problem in the community?
- What do you want the committee to do? Is it a manageable and achievable task?
- How long will the committee operate?
- What kind of community representation is proposed?
- How is the membership to be selected?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of committee members?
- What will be the role of Ministry staff? Is the Ministry to have a member on the committee? Are you to provide support staff or an executive secretariat to the group?
- What other resources are to be provided to the committee? Will the committee need to use an experienced facilitator? (For a discussion of the role of a facilitator, see the handbook, **MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP**).
- What is the reporting function of the committee?



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE

- What will be the basic operating rules for the committee? (For example, all committee meetings must be open to the public.) Will a letter of appointment be required?

At the end of this handbook, there is an example of a Terms of Reference from a Ministry program. Use it as a model to develop terms appropriate to your consultation objectives.

Step 2: Inform the Public of the Opportunity

You will need to inform people about the proposed establishment of the committee, and the opportunity it presents for involvement.

A key task will be to identify who should participate. For a neighbourhood-based monitoring committee, you will want to inform all the residents of the neighbourhood. Leaflets dropped in mailboxes might be an effective approach. For long-term policy-related issues, a combination of media advertising and targeted mailings may be required to attract a broad range of interested people.



Develop a list of potential members or groups to approach. Talk informally with those likely to be involved or affected. Ask their advice about who you should contact and how to notify them. Review the list with your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator and others.

For more ideas, see **THE GUIDE** and the Communications Branch's publication, **ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS**.

Step 3: Select Committee Members

Membership in the Ministry's public committees is usually selected in one of two ways: either by the Minister or by those individuals and groups you have asked to become involved. Your terms of reference should make it clear how the members of your committee are to be selected.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE

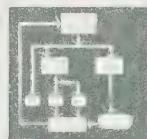
Ministerial appointments often are made on the advice of staff. If you are responsible for advising on the membership, you will want to develop a list that has a cross-section of perspectives and interests from the community. Again, meet or talk informally with people to find out their views.

Committee membership is usually selected by people in the community through any one of several formats:

- Groups or associations within the community can nominate one or more representatives at the invitation of the Ministry. This approach still makes you responsible for identifying a good cross-section of interests. You also will need to provide a forum for people to get together to discuss and choose their representatives.
- Nominations can be put forth at a public meeting, and members selected on the basis of a show-of-hands or secret ballot, depending on the wishes of the people attending the meeting. This method requires that the public meeting be well-advertised, and supported by informal notifications or targeted mailings to all key groups.
- Nominations can be put forth at-large in the community, and selection made on the basis of a secret ballot. Such an approach would be done only at the request of people in the community.
- Membership can be made up of anyone who volunteers. This has the advantage of ensuring that all interested people have the chance to participate. However, it does require you do to an excellent job of advertising the opportunity to participate, and it does not guarantee that you will get a cross-section of interests from the community.

Step 4: Manage the Committee's Work

Remember that the committee is designed to support a public consultation program. You will need to actively manage, not control, the process to ensure that the committee remains focused on its major tasks.



In some ways, managing a public committee is like running a public meeting or a workshop. A committee meeting should have a formal agenda and be advertised much like a public meeting. Committee meetings themselves are often run like workshops, with resource materials distributed in advance and facilitators animating the discussion. (See the handbooks, **RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING** and **MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP**.)

Setting the “ground rules” is usually the subject of the committee’s first meeting. Define the objectives and tasks of the committee. Clarify your role and that of the Ministry. Other “ground rules” will need to address such questions as:

- Should the committee run according to Roberts Rules of Order, or use a more informal approach conducive to a group problem-solving exercise?
- How is the chairperson to be chosen? Should the position rotate among the membership?
- Are there attendance requirements to remain a member in good standing? Will there be designated alternates?
- How will consensus be determined?
- Who will speak on behalf of the committee? Is this the responsibility of the chair or committee executive? If you, as the Ministry’s representative, are the spokesperson, should you discuss your comments first with the committee executive?
- What is to be the working relationship of Ministry staff to the committee?

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMITTEE

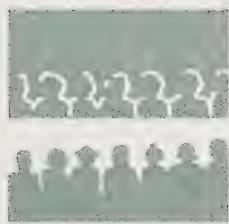
- How will the committee's meetings be publicized?
(It is Ministry policy to ensure that all public committee meetings are open to the public, but the group also may want the media invited.)

If there are long delays (for example, the release of a key report), your management support will be important in building commitment and maintaining interest among members.

Throughout the course of the committee's work, you will need to reinforce the need for accountability. There is always a danger that some members of public committees become out of touch with their constituencies. To promote accountability, keep the general public informed at all stages through regular, well-publicized public meetings and open houses, and through newsletters and informal communication. Make the committee's decisions and recommendations the subject of wider public consultation.

Step 5: Use the Committee to Support Other Elements of Your Public Consultation Program

Your efforts to provide for public consultation cannot begin and end with your public committee. Actively use the committee to support your consultation program. The committee, for example, can launch or lend its credibility and visibility to other consultation activities that have a wider audience.



YOUR ROLE

As manager of the public consultation program, you will be a resource person throughout the course of the committee's work. In some cases, you may also be a member of the committee.

As both a manager and committee member, your major responsibilities are:

- **Identifying an achievable target**

You will need to identify the committee's task and explain it to people in the community. The task must be recognized as both important and achievable within a reasonable time period. Seek people's ideas on what the scope and objectives of the committee should be:

“Do you think that this committee should focus primarily on helping develop the clean-up plan, or do you think it should also monitor the clean-up work as well?”



- **Building commitment and enthusiasm**

As volunteers, committee members usually are prepared to work together and be enthusiastic about the project. Check regularly with the members, either directly or through a facilitator, to hear if their attitudes are changing or to anticipate potential problems. Ask for their ideas on how to maintain interest:

“We've worked hard the last few months. We've had meetings every week instead of every month as we had planned. Are we meeting too often? Should we form working committees that can report back to a monthly meeting?”

Make sure that the members know you appreciate their work and contribution. Acknowledge their efforts, both directly and in forums such as public meetings and newsletters. Show committee members how their work is of direct benefit:

“The recommendations that will be presented at tonight’s public meeting are the result of many long hours of hard work and discussion by your public advisory committee. The committee members are all volunteers, working on behalf of your community. On behalf of the Ministry, I’d like to thank the members for their work and commitment.”

• Acting as a resource person

As the Ministry’s representative, you must help facilitate the work of the committee. You will be the committee’s key resource person, as well as providing or coordinating the provision of a range of services.



The Ministry usually provides secretariat services to public committees. For example, you or someone you hire may be responsible for: taking and distributing committee meeting minutes; organizing and publicizing meetings; circulating documents; arranging audio-visual services; and representing the committee at other meetings.

If the committee is using a facilitator, work closely with that person.

You may also be called upon by the committee to respond to technical and policy questions. Are data available? What is the Ministry policy on a particular issue? If you do not know the answer, say so, and promise to get back to the committee members with an answer as soon as possible:

“I’m sorry, but I don’t know the answer to that question. The impact on water resources is an important issue for the committee. Would you like me to arrange to have someone from the Ministry attend our next meeting and make a presentation?”

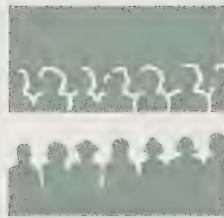
- **Ensuring accountability**

The importance of the committee's public accountability has already been noted. Remember that you are the link between the committee and: the public; the public consultation program of which the committee is a part; and the Ministry.

Keep the lines of communication open and active between the Ministry and your committee. Anticipate potential difficulties and resolve them as soon as possible. Ask committee members what they need from the Ministry. Let the Ministry, in turn, know what support you need from it:

“I’m attending a meeting next week of the Ministry’s regional managers, and I’ll be giving a presentation on the progress of this advisory committee. Are there any particular issues or concerns you would like me to raise?”

Finally, remember that you are accountable as well. Communicate regularly with your committee members between meetings. Let your chairperson know about any new developments. Call people on the telephone even if you have “nothing important” to discuss. They will appreciate the fact that you are keeping in contact with them.



HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

You selected a public committee to help meet the objectives of your public consultation program. Did it succeed? If not, then why not? Build on-going evaluation into your committee work.

You should seek evaluation from four sources:



1. You and your colleagues

Regularly discuss the committee's progress with agency staff and others involved in the consultation activity. Is the committee undertaking the task set out for it? If not, is it because you have not explained it clearly? Are all the community's interests represented on the committee? Are the committee's operating rules working well? Does the Ministry need to provide more support services? Are there regular lines of communication? (See the Communications Branch's publication, **ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS.**)

Once the committee is dissolved, identify the lessons you and your colleagues have learned. Can the experience and good relations built up over the course of the committee's work be applied to other elements of your consultation program?

2. Members of the committee

Regularly ask for comments from your committee members. You can make evaluation part of the agenda of the committee's meetings. For large committees, consider distributing comment sheets or organizing a special evaluation session.

Ask for comments on such questions as:

- Do participants understand the committee's objectives?
- Do they agree with the objectives?
- Do they believe that the committee membership is a fair representation of the community's interests?
- Are they satisfied with the support provided by Ministry staff?

3. Members of the public

Check with other people (not on the committee) regularly through the course of your consultation program to get their views of the committee's work. Use both formal consultation activities and informal communication to ask:

- Are people satisfied that the committee fairly represents the cross-section of concerns in the community?
- Are they being informed well enough about the committee's meetings and decisions?
- What other consultation activities should you or the committee be undertaking?

4. Your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator

Review the comments and advice you receive from committee members and the public with your Project Co-ordinator. Consider asking your co-ordinator to sit in on one or two committee meetings as part of your evaluation strategy.

Based on your on-going evaluation from these sources, make any necessary changes to your public committee or consultation program. Take advantage of training opportunities to improve your consultation and program management skills.

Sample:

TERMS OF REFERENCE



PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE NIAGARA RIVER REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN

THE REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN (RAP) PROCESS AND THE PAC

The RAP Process

The purpose of the RAP process is to produce, through consensus-building, a plan that when implemented will restore and protect beneficial uses of the Niagara River and its basin (Ontario).

The RAP will build on past and ongoing efforts and will be consistent with the requirements of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1987 and the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting Great Lakes Water Quality.

A Canadian federal-provincial RAP team has been created to coordinate the development of a Remedial Action Plan.

The Public Advisory Committee (PAC)

The PAC will operate as an advisory body to the RAP Team, representing a variety of views on key aspects of the RAP preparation and implementation. The PAC will consider all views presented by the general public in formulating its consensus.

Objectives of the PAC

- to represent the range of community interests and concerns
- to provide a focal point for the views and positions of the public in the development of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan

- to assist the RAP Team in implementing a public information program for the general public, in part by acting as a liaison between the PAC and its member organizations
- to provide a basis for generating community support for implementation of the final plan

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PAC: Group Responsibilities

The role of the PAC is to advise the RAP Team throughout the RAP development and implementation process. The PAC will:

- identify and prioritize beneficial water uses to be restored
- review results of research
- provide input to and review descriptions of environmental conditions, sources and proposed remedial options, and the draft RAP document
- contribute to and review Canada-New York joint statements of goals and environmental conditions
- identify parties responsible for implementation of remedial measures
- review and comment on the scheduling of remedial measures
- assist the RAP Team in designing a process to evaluate the effectiveness of remedial action measures
- review and provide input on the overall public involvement program for both the planning and implementation phases
- review each stage of the Niagara (New York) RAP for consistency with goals and objectives of the PAC

PAC: Individual Member Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each individual appointed to the PAC to:

- prepare for and attend all PAC meetings (about 5 to 10 hours per month)
- represent the views, interests and values of their respective group(s). This means communicating all information and viewpoints back to the group(s) to seek support and positions on issues discussed at PAC meetings and to convey the group's positions back to the PAC
- promote community awareness, understanding and support for implementation of the RAP

In addition, attendance at open houses and meetings for the general public (2 to 3 meetings per year) by PAC representatives would be desirable.

MEMBERSHIP AND PRESENTATION

General

It is the intent of the RAP Team to have a wide range of community representation on the PAC. Membership on the PAC shall attempt to include individuals representing community organizations, local government agencies and the general public having a direct effect on, or being directly affected by, the water quality of the Niagara River. The PAC may also include groups or individuals having an interest in the uses and management of the river.

Membership Criteria

It is anticipated that the Niagara River (Ontario) PAC will be comprised of 24 members.

In order for the Canadian Niagara River PAC to represent a balance of community interests and concerns, the RAP Team encourages representatives from the following sectors to participate:

Fishing	Agriculture
Health	Environmental Groups
Labour	Niagara Parks Commission
Power Generation	Municipal Governments
Tourism & Recreation	Conservation Authorities
Industry/Business	General Public
Community Groups	

PAC members are to represent only one sector, although they may represent a number of groups within that sector.

The PAC member will be required to present a letter on official stationery from the group(s) that the member is representing. The letter shall state that the PAC member has the authority to represent the interests of that group(s) on the PAC.

PAC Organization

Initially, the PAC shall meet and determine operating rules of procedure, including frequency of meetings, time, location, the need for additional members, etc., and shall review these rules of procedure with the RAP Team.

The RAP Coordinator or alternate shall attend all PAC meetings.

Agenda and supporting reports shall be distributed in advance of any meeting in order to ensure that all members of the PAC are kept fully informed.

The PAC may appoint sub-committees to address specific issues. Members of the sub-committees need not be members of the PAC.

PAC meetings are open for anyone to attend as an observer. Adequate notice of all PAC meetings shall be provided to PAC members, interested parties and the public.

The PAC can meet as often as necessary during the day, evenings or on weekends, as determined by the membership.

Facilitator

Services of a facilitator to assist the PAC can be provided.

Specific duties of the facilitator may include organizing meeting dates and locations, preparing agendas and minutes, circulation of reports, and attendance at all PAC meetings.

Chairmanship

A Chairman shall preside over PAC meetings. The Chairman's objective shall be to discuss all issues fairly and manage the meeting so as to achieve a consensus on each issue for presentation to the RAP Team.

The criteria for selection of a Chairman must centre on the individual's ability to oversee and direct the workings of a diverse grouping of interests in meeting the PAC's objectives. Appointment of the Chairman shall be made by the PAC as a whole. The PAC can select the facilitator to act as Chairman.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO PROVIDE COMMENTS

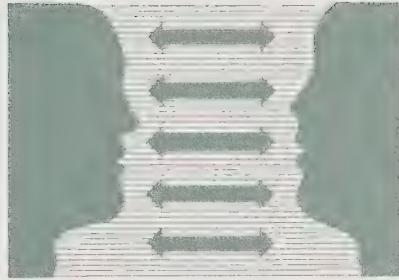
For more information, or to submit your suggestions, phone (collect), **Paul Odom, Niagara River RAP Coordinator, at the Environment Ontario office in Hamilton, (416) 521-7674.** Written comments may be forwarded to:

**Niagara RAP Office
Environment Ontario
119 King St. West Box 2112
Hamilton Ontario L8N 3Z9**

Remedial Action Plan Plan d'Assainissement

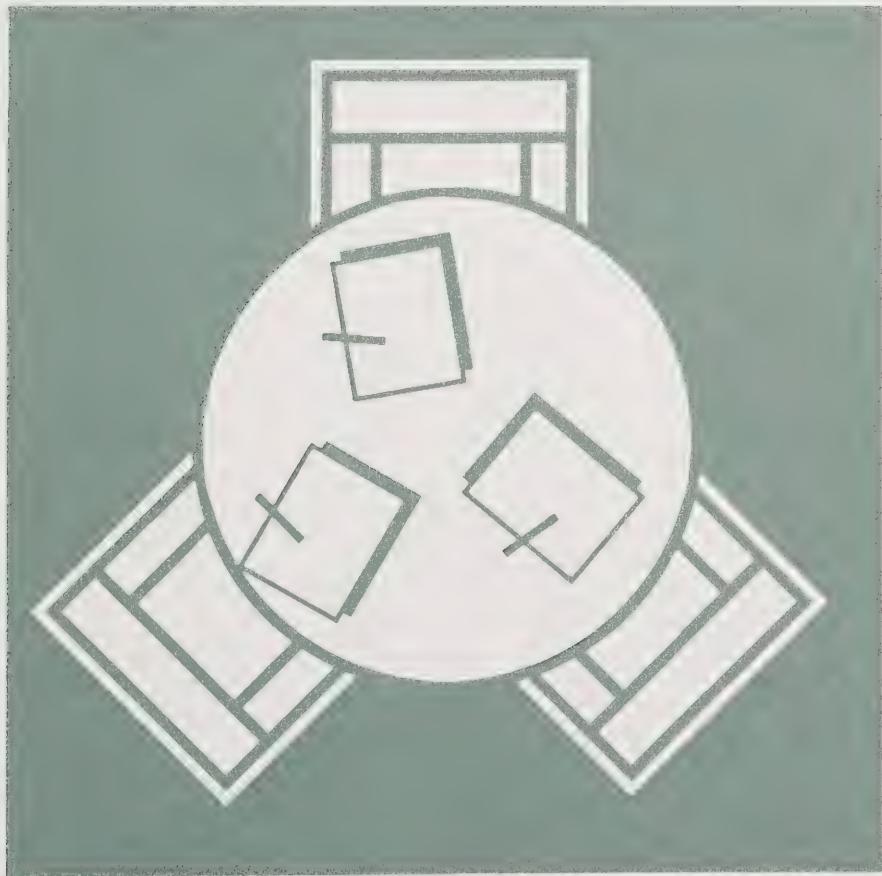
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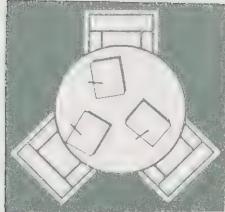
MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION HANDBOOK



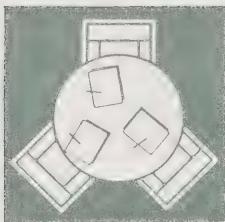
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IS A WORKSHOP FOR YOU?

A workshop is a structured forum where people are invited to work together in a group (or groups) on a common problem or task. The goals are to solve problems and build consensus for action, rather than simply to provide information or answer people's questions. Participants are typically selected for their knowledge, expertise and cross-section of views. Usually limited to a small number of participants, a workshop is best run by a "facilitator" who animates the participants, structures their discussion and articulates the results of the discussion.

A workshop can help you meet three general kinds of objectives in your public consultation program:

- **Understanding the public**

A workshop will allow you to hear in detail the views and suggestions of participants.



- **Discussing the issues**

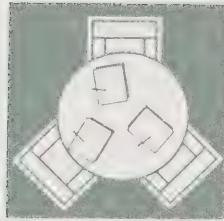
You and other participants who may be on different sides of an issue can hear other viewpoints and possible solutions in a non-confrontational atmosphere.



- **Building consensus for action**

An extremely effective use of a workshop is to help you develop a consensus for action. A workshop encourages creativity. Participants can have a free-flowing discussion of new avenues and innovative approaches that can result in a group decision or position.





SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

If you have decided to hold a workshop:



1. Define a realistic problem or challenge for the group.

If the purpose of the day is not clear, then workshop participants may spend too much time trying to define their challenge, or trying to promote their own idea of what the challenge should be. If your objectives are not realistic, then you risk leaving participants with a sense of failure or frustration at not having achieved anything.

2. Use an experienced workshop facilitator.

A workshop's success can depend to a large extent on facilitation. Your facilitator need not be (and likely will not be) an expert in the subject matter of the workshop. However, your facilitator must have excellent interpersonal skills to animate the group, spark creative ideas and yet keep the discussion focused on your primary problem or task.

Depending on the needs of your public consultation program, you may need a facilitator not only for the day of the workshop, but for some time before and after, as well. Some programs require the services of a facilitator several weeks prior to and after the workshop. In these cases, the facilitator is responsible for organizing the event, contacting participants and preparing a report on the workshop proceedings.

Unless you are an experienced, trained facilitator, resist the temptation to do the job yourself. Even if you do a good job of it, facilitating will keep you from your more important

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

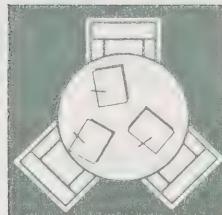
role at the workshop, that of the “host” who is an active listener and observer.

While a good facilitator is important, you should not hand over responsibility for the workshop to the facilitator. Remember, the workshop is yours, and the facilitator is there to serve the needs of the consultation activity. However, to use your facilitator effectively, you must be clear about your expectations for the workshop.

3. Select participants carefully.

Selecting the right mix of participants is important. You may want either a range of viewpoints and interests represented, or people with a relatively common set of interests. Think about who should be there to obtain a good range of perspectives. Ensure that your participants understand the problem and are prepared to work on the common task.

If you want a wide range of interests represented at your workshop, become familiar with the different opinions in the community. Be aware of the potential for conflict among different groups. Do not try to avoid this conflict, as it may be an important part of the process of finding a consensus.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP

Step 1: Understand Your Objectives and Develop a Workplan

Use the ideas and guidelines in **THE GUIDE** to make sure that a workshop is the most effective consultation activity to meet your needs.



Consider the staff, resources and time you have available. Use **THE CHECKLIST**. Assign tasks, but make sure that someone, if not yourself, is responsible for overseeing all stages of planning.

Check with your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch for advice and assistance. Consider that you will have to give participants enough notice so that they can make the time on their schedules. This may mean that you have to spend time on the telephone with various participants, finding a suitable date for everyone.

Step 2: Work With a Facilitator

The working relationship you establish with your facilitator will be an important factor in determining the success of your workshop. Ask your colleagues and Project Co-ordinator to recommend experienced facilitators.



The facilitator's primary job is to be a catalyst for generating ideas. The facilitator will direct people's thinking and keep the discussion moving so that the group can develop solutions or recommendations. Specific facilitation tasks during the workshop include:

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP

- outlining the agenda and proposed “rules of order” for the day
- bringing out the concerns and ideas of all participants
- clarifying and restating ideas
- clustering and ordering ideas
- articulating proposals, options and recommendations
- checking frequently with you to ensure that people are addressing what you want discussed

Meet with your facilitator before the workshop. Clearly express your objectives for the workshop. Clarify the facilitator’s tasks: do the tasks go beyond running the workshop and extend to organizing the event, contacting participants and preparing a summary report?

The facilitator will not likely be an expert on the workshop’s issue or problem. Therefore, you will need to provide an orientation to the key issues, constraints and perspectives related to the problem. Provide relevant background reports.

It is extremely important to determine “ground rules” for how you and the facilitator will work together during the workshop. Respect the facilitator’s experience and skills in animating discussion and articulating options. However, make sure you manage the workshop. Let the facilitator know that you want to have regular opportunities to respond to the discussion.

Clearly state that you expect the facilitator will not take sides or become actively involved in the debate.

Anticipate possible problems and discuss how the two of you might respond. What if several participants get into a shouting match? What if the group continually drifts off the subject? What if the group reaches a roadblock before reaching consensus on recommendations? However, you must be careful not to undermine the facilitator’s role, for example, by jumping into the discussion when you think participants are drifting off topic.

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP

Step 3: Schedule the Time and Location

The workshop format is not rigid. You will be able to organize the best approach to meet your circumstances and needs. Typically, a workshop will begin in the morning and run the entire day, and perhaps include a working lunch. Workshops running a day and a half or two days are not uncommon. These may require that you arrange overnight accommodation and meals for participants. Regardless of the duration, make sure you build in a time for you, your facilitator and the participants to review and evaluate the workshop.



Location and setting can play a major role in the success of your workshop. The workshop should be held away from everyone's office, so that no one is distracted by work demands. In some cases, a rural or secluded site can help you build a sense of teamwork among the group, and increase the productivity of the workshop. With a rural site, you may have to arrange transportation for participants. In a city or town setting, use a conference centre, community centre, public library or hotel meeting room. Consider whether participants will be able to use public transit or car pooling.

Be sure to look at the facility before you book it. You will want the chairs to be comfortable and the room large enough to accommodate the number of invited participants "around the table." In many cases, you will also need more than one room to accommodate small group discussions.

Step 4: Invite the Participants and Prepare Materials

You will want the right mix of perspectives and experiences to generate good discussion and provide you with ideas and insightful comments. Think about who should be at your workshop to provide this mix. In some cases, you will be able to identify individuals. In other cases, the best you can do is to identify particular groups or associations, and then let the groups select individuals to represent them.



Remember that the size of the workshop can vary depending

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP

on your issue and needs. A small group workshop of perhaps only five people may be appropriate for a localized or site-specific problem. For more complex issues, workshops of up to 100 people may be required.

Make sure each prospective participant is contacted informally well before the workshop, either by you or your facilitator. Outline the purpose of the workshop and the general approach you plan to take. State clearly what you expect from the participants, and how much preparation they will need to do before the workshop. Clarify logistical matters, such as duration, transportation and accommodation. Ask if they have any questions. Some people, for example, will want to know who else you have invited.

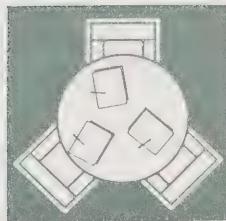
Once people have agreed to participate, follow up your informal contacts with a letter of invitation, repeating the key messages you discussed previously. Send out at least two weeks in advance any materials that participants will need in order to prepare.

You may need to prepare some display or resource materials for the workshop. These may include slides or overheads, flip charts, backgrounders, explanation of tasks and evaluation sheets. Generally, displays and materials used in a workshop should be kept simple. Drafts, hand-drawn sketches or outlines should be used to invite comment and participation. Materials must reflect the workshop's creative problem-solving approach. Participants are there to build a consensus, not respond to a pre-determined solution.

Step 5: Set Up

Use **THE CHECKLIST**. Arrive early to make certain the room is open, a sufficient number of chairs is available, any audio-visual facilities are in place, and any food and beverage arrangements are in order. No matter the workshop location (even if it is well known within the community), make sure that there are signs directing people to the room(s), particularly at the entrance to the facility.





YOUR ROLE

Your workshop will place you in a role unlike any to be found in other consultation activities: that of a “host” to a group of invited people who are there to work on a problem you have set. You are there more as a listener than as an active participant, although, as discussed below, it may be appropriate for you to participate. Another twist is that the activity will be run, for the most part, not by you but by a facilitator.

As the workshop host, you are responsible for:

- **Setting the challenge**

At the start of the day, you must re-state the problem or challenge. Your explanation need not be long, but it must be clear and realistic. Set limits. Provide participants with any recent developments that might not have been included in your letter of invitation or background materials:

“As I mentioned to each of you on the phone and in my letter, if we can leave here today with a set of eight or perhaps ten proposals that we can then present to people at a public meeting, then we will have achieved a great deal.”

- **Acknowledging the participants**

Participants should be asked to introduce themselves.

If your workshop is too large to do this, then prepare and distribute a list of participants’ names. In every case, all participants should wear name tags, with full first and last names, and affiliation, if appropriate.



Thank participants in advance for their time and effort in volunteering to help you. Introduce the facilitator. Briefly explain the facilitator's role, and then "hand over" running of the workshop to the facilitator.

• Keeping the group on course

Throughout the workshop, it is important that you communicate well with your facilitator to keep the group on course. Your facilitator should check with you to ensure that the participants are remaining focused on the challenge and are providing you with what you need. This will give you a chance to reassure participants that they are on course, or to clarify your objectives and re-direct the discussion if the participants are drifting into other topics.

You can say to the group:

"I'm finding this discussion very helpful. I think it would be really interesting to move on to explore the last two ideas in some detail."

or:

"These are good ideas. But I need to hear more reaction to the three options that were developed this morning."

• Responding to options

You may be called upon to react to the group's discussion. Your responses must be carefully considered. An extremely favourable reply may imply that you are accepting the solution, which may heighten expectations for action. A strongly negative response, on the other hand, could detract from the momentum of the group and lead some group members to withdraw their active participation.

If the facilitator has not done so, be sure to ask for clarification and more details, and make sure all sides have expressed their views.

You might say to the participants:

“That seems at first look to be a promising area for us to explore. I’d like you to discuss what you see as the implications of the proposal.”

or:

“Let’s keep that one on the board and not throw it out. Do we need to explore its impacts a little more? Does it address all three of our objectives? It may address the first one, but I’m not sure about the other two. What do other people think?”

• Supporting your facilitator

Having established the ground rules with your facilitator prior to the workshop, you will need to support the facilitator throughout the day. Take advantage of coffee breaks to let your facilitator know how you see the discussion evolving, and if you think any changes are needed in the way the workshop is being run.



Your unique position as workshop host will allow you to be an active listener and observer. While the facilitator is busy talking directly with one participant, or clustering ideas, you have the opportunity to observe the reactions of all the participants. If the facilitator does not see these reactions, you may need to note them. You will have to do so carefully, however, so as not to undermine the facilitator’s role. You could say, for example:

“I saw a lot of people shaking their heads during the discussion of this option. Can we go back to that for just a few minutes?”

or:

“I’m sorry to interrupt, but Les said something that’s important, and I’m not sure I fully understand it. Could you repeat what you said, please?”

• Your participation in the discussion

As workshop host, you can also serve as a resource person. However, if your participation is limited, you may want to include other Ministry staff as more active participants.

If you have a useful contribution to make to the discussion, you should participate. However, you should be careful not to jump into the discussion first, nor to get into a debate with other participants. (No “finger-pointing”.)

Remember, the primary reason you are holding a workshop is to hear people’s views and proposals. You need a free-flowing discussion, and you need to recognize when that discussion might be inhibited by frequent comments from the host.

• Identifying decisions and next steps

At the end of the workshop, you or more likely your facilitator will need to provide a summary of the day. Check with the participants to make sure all have a common understanding of any conclusions and recommendations made by the group:

“... Those appear to be the three major options decided upon today. Does anyone have any comments or changes?”

If you needed a consensus from the workshop and were unable to develop one, you may need to organize one or more additional workshops, or consider other consultation activities. Ask participants for their advice.

As host, you should have the final word. Remind participants that the workshop is part of a larger consultation program. State how the results of the workshop are to be used in later consultation activities. Identify your next steps, particularly any obligation to inform the broader public of the workshop’s results:

"I'm sure we'll all agree that the recommendations need to have the benefit of a much wider public discussion. I intend to summarize our workshop results in the next newsletter, and ask for people to comment on them at next month's regular public meeting."

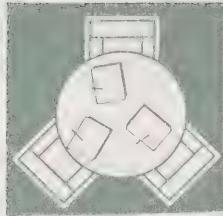
To help you evaluate your own efforts and those of the facilitator, ask for comments on any and all aspects of the workshop's planning and implementation. Finally, thank the facilitator and the participants for their time and efforts.

- **Following up**

Send a summary of the workshop results to all participants as soon as it is prepared. Invite their comments on the summary to ensure that it is accurate and complete.



When sending the summary, ensure that your covering letter outlines the next steps in the consultation program. Note if these steps have changed since you discussed them at the workshop. Include an analysis of the comments. Finally, thank them again for their efforts and tell them that you will keep them informed of progress on the issue.



HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

You selected a workshop to help meet the needs of your public consultation program. Did it succeed? Build evaluation into your consultation program at all stages.

You should seek input from four sources: yourself; the facilitator; workshop participants; and your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator.



1. You and your facilitator

As soon as possible, hold a de-briefing session with your facilitator and any other Ministry staff who attended. Share your views about how the day went. Review how you and your facilitator worked together. Ask yourselves what lessons you learned. Communicate these ideas to your colleagues who may have helped you plan the workshop, but who were not in attendance.

2. Workshop participants

Build evaluation into your agenda. Make it clear to participants that you want their comments.

In small workshops, have your facilitator bring the day to a close with an informal discussion on what went well and what did not go well during the course of the day. Where appropriate, ask for comments on specific aspects of both the planning and implementation of the workshop.

Your facilitator could ask:

“Can we spend just a few minutes on what happened today? I’m interested in your reactions. Was this about the right number of people? Did you receive enough background material prior to the workshop? What can be done next time to improve a workshop?”

In addition, prepare a comment sheet and distribute it at

HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

the end of the day. The comment sheet should be brief, with “yes-no” questions. However, some room should be left for longer, more detailed responses. Use Ministry letterhead or your program’s logo on the comment sheet. Include a full mailing address if participants can mail in the comment sheet, although it is preferable to have people complete the sheet before leaving.

Make sure that you convey to participants how you plan to use their comments, and be sure to state that filling out the form is voluntary.

You could say:

“Before you go home, I’d like your comments on the workshop. Your ideas will help us in planning future activities. I’ll distribute this brief comment sheet. There’s no need to sign your name. If you’d like to speak to me personally, as well, I’ll be around for awhile after we conclude. Thank you.”

Do not take any evaluation comments personally. Remember that negative comments are not necessarily a sign that your workshop was unsuccessful. Try to look beyond the words on the sheets. Think about what people are really saying and what could be behind their comments. For example, people may be critical of the proposed project, yet appreciative of your efforts to consult with them.

This handbook contains a sample comment sheet. Use it as a model, but keep in mind that yours should reflect the particular circumstances and objectives of your workshop.

3. Your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator

Ask your Communications Project Co-ordinator to sit in on at least part of the workshop and be part of the de-briefing exercise.

Based on your evaluation from these sources, make any necessary changes in your consultation program. Take advantage of training opportunities to improve your consultation and program management skills.

Sample:



Ministry
of the
Environment Ministère
de
l'Environnement

WORKSHOP COMMENT SHEET

Do you think the workshop:
achieved its goal?

Yes _____ No _____
helped you to better understand the issue?

Yes _____ No _____
was well organized?

Yes _____ No _____
gave you an adequate opportunity to express your views?

Yes _____ No _____
facilitator helped the group?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you think another workshop would be helpful?

Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for completing this Comment Sheet.

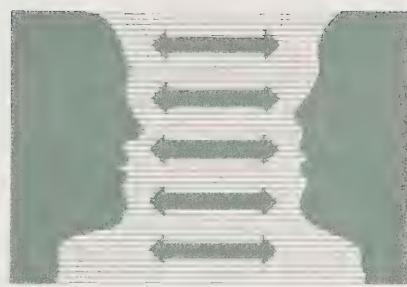
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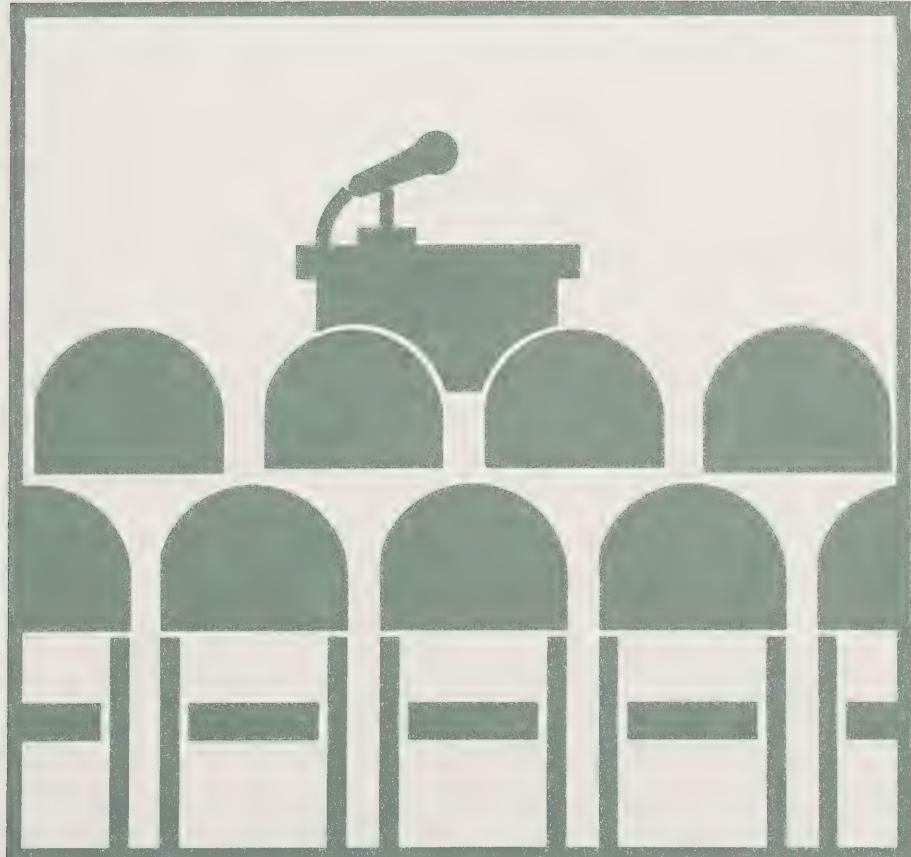
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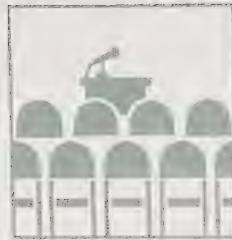
RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION HANDBOOK



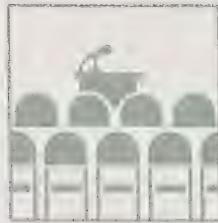
Environment
Ontario





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IS A PUBLIC MEETING FOR YOU?

A public meeting provides you with an opportunity to exchange information, comments and questions with a large number of people. It typically follows a set agenda and is chaired by a Ministry representative or neutral party. It features formal presentations and a question-and-answer session.

A public meeting demonstrates the Ministry's willingness to conduct business openly and directly. Its visibility is one of its chief strengths.

The face-to-face presentation format allows people to obtain immediate clarification of any facts or proposals that have been presented. A public meeting also allows people to hear the views and concerns of others in their community.

The public meeting is held in a convenient location within the community. It usually lasts several hours in the evening, although times and duration will vary, depending on the subject matter and the audience.

A public meeting is a widely used consultation activity at all stages of a public consultation program: introducing a problem or proposed project; explaining constraints and options; and reporting on final decisions. It can help you meet the following general consultation objectives:

- Providing information**

A public meeting is an excellent way to convey information to a large group of people. Everyone has the opportunity to hear and discuss the same information. You have the chance to respond to questions directly, and to identify where more information may be required.



IS A PUBLIC MEETING FOR YOU?

- **Understanding people's concerns and discussing the issues**

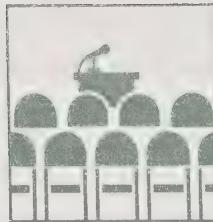
You can hear individual and group concerns, and hear how people with different viewpoints are responding to your ideas and to the comments of others. A public meeting can also encourage a group discussion among many interests in the community.



- **Ensuring follow-up**

You can keep a relatively large number of people informed of next steps in the consultation program and of any final decision regarding the issue or project. You can discuss, in a personal and direct manner, how people's comments have been incorporated into the decision or explain why their views are not reflected.





SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are three key factors to keep in mind when planning a public meeting:

1. Notify people and groups who must be consulted.

In addition to conventional advertising, you may need to make a special effort to inform those who must be consulted and who you want at the public meeting. This will be particularly important in the early stages of your consultation program, when some interests or groups within the community may be unfamiliar with the issue or your program.

Use a combination of notification tools such as informal communication, leaflets in every mailbox in a neighbourhood, and personal letters.

For more ideas, see **THE GUIDE**, and the Communications Branch's publication, **ACHIEVING GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS**.

2. Select an effective chairperson.

The role of chairperson is extremely important to the success of your public meeting. Whether the chairperson is a Ministry representative familiar with the issue or a neutral party who may be unfamiliar with the issue, the role of chairperson demands excellent communication and facilitation skills.

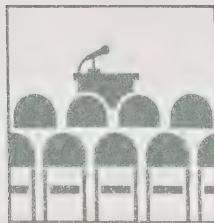
While a good chairperson is important, you must remain responsible for the overall management of the public meeting.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. Practise your communication skills.

Public meetings require good communication and interpersonal skills. You and others may be called upon to make a formal presentation, answer questions or discuss issues. The keys to effective communication are practice and preparation. See **THE GUIDE** for helpful ideas on improving your communication skills, and take advantage of training courses.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING

Step 1: Understand Your Objectives and Develop an Agenda

Be clear about your consultation needs, the circumstances of the community and the issues. Use **THE GUIDE** to make sure that a public meeting is the best activity for your needs. Develop a workplan. Use **THE CHECKLIST**.



Discuss the information components of your public meeting with your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator.

Consider who should chair the meeting. If the project or issue is controversial, try to find someone who is considered a respected, “neutral” person by all parties.

Be aware of the potential for conflict among different groups or interests within the community. Do not try to avoid conflict. You will need to deal with this conflict later if you are trying to build a consensus.

Once you have determined that a public meeting will contribute to your consultation program, develop an agenda. First, clarify the specific purpose of the meeting and topics to be covered. Identify those people you will need to invite as presenters or resource people. Determine your communication needs as well as the need for special audio-visual displays or equipment.

A good agenda typically includes the following elements of a meeting:

- **Welcome** (either by you as a Ministry representative, or the chairperson)
- **Introductions** (of people at the head table who will be making presentations or answering questions)

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING

- **Purpose of the Meeting** (including how it relates to your on-going public consultation program, as well as an overview of the meeting's agenda and format)
- **Presentations**
- **Question-and-Answer Session**
- **Summary** (of the meeting, by you or the chairperson, including identification of next steps in the consultation program)

This handbook includes an example of an agenda from an Environment Ontario program. While it is a useful model, your agenda will have to reflect the particular circumstances of your issue and audience.

Step 2: Schedule and Advertise the Meeting

Attendance at a public meeting is difficult to predict. This means that selecting the location of your meeting requires careful consideration.

You need a room large enough to handle the expected turnout plus unexpected visitors. The location must be convenient and accessible. Do not use Ministry offices unless you have no option, or unless people say they want to meet there. Consider public schools, libraries, community halls or hotel facilities. However, be aware of sensitivities or preferences among different groups in the community. Ask people for their advice.



Advertise in a manner appropriate to the community or audience. What suits a metropolitan area may not be best for people in a northern mining town. You will usually want to give people at least two weeks' notice, and follow up with a second advertisement the day before the meeting. Use informal communication activities to encourage "word-of-mouth" advertising, particularly among those groups who you must consult.

The Communications Branch is responsible for placing all paid advertisements. Plan your advertising strategy with your Project Co-ordinator.

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING

As part of your advertising, mail the agenda to people on your mailing list and to others who you may want to invite personally.

Step 3: Work with Your Chairperson

Often, it is preferable to have your public meeting chaired by a respected member of the community whose impartiality and good judgment may be important elements in the success of your meeting. You should brief the chairperson, before the meeting, on the issue and recent developments. Explain your expectations for the chairperson's role at the meeting. Discuss the potential for conflict or controversy and decide how problems might be handled.



Generally, a chairperson will:

- state the purpose of the meeting
- interpret and enforce procedural matters, maintaining order and fairness
- remain impartial to the discussion
- facilitate the exchange of ideas
- manage a question-and-answer session, including identifying appropriate respondents
- summarize the meeting's recommendations or decisions
- bring the meeting to a close by identifying next steps or activities in the consultation program

For ideas on ways to improve your chairing skills, see **THE GUIDE**.

Step 4: Practise Your Presentations

Good presentations require organization and practice. Understand the objectives of your presentation and keep to the topic. Use overhead transparencies only if you are comfortable with them. Talk to the key points, rather than reading the text from the overheads. Consider preparing handouts that summarize or complement your presentation.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING

The best presentations are the ones given in a relaxed and natural manner. Use note cards rather than reading a speech. Make frequent eye contact with your audience, and note how your audience is reacting. If people seem unclear on a point, ask them if they want you to clarify your comments.

If possible, have a “dry run” of all the presentations prior to the public meeting. Anticipate difficult questions and practise your responses.

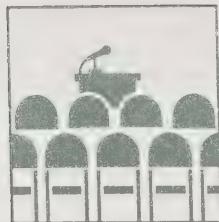
Step 5: Set Up Early

A public meeting typically involves a substantial number of logistical concerns. Use **THE CHECKLIST**. If possible, inspect and test the meeting room facilities prior to the meeting. On the day of the meeting, arrive at least an hour before the start to ensure that your set-up instructions have been followed, and that everything and everyone are ready.



Important set-up questions include:

- Do you have signs at the building entrance or by the elevators to guide people to the meeting rooms?
- Are there enough chairs available, and have they been arranged according to your instructions?
- Is the head table set up properly?
- Is there a sign-in table by the door?
- Do all Ministry staff and presenters have name tags?
- Are there sufficient copies of the agenda available?
- Are display materials and handouts available?
- Are the microphones and projectors working?
- Are your comment sheets ready?
- Are refreshments confirmed?



YOUR ROLE

As manager of the public meeting, your role may include chairing the meeting, making a formal presentation, responding to people's questions and identifying the next steps in the public consultation program.

In general, your tasks will be:

- **Supervising set-up**

You will need to manage the overall set-up of the public meeting. Use **THE CHECKLIST**. Meet with your chairperson and presenters prior to the meeting. Explain the agenda and clarify your expectations. Ensure that all your presenters understand that they are not to get into debates with each other or with members of the audience. Reiterate that the chairperson will facilitate the meeting.

- **Greeting visitors before the meeting starts**

Greet people as they enter the meeting room. Introduce yourself. Invite them to sign the guest book and take a comment sheet. If time permits, ask how they heard about the meeting, what their views are of the proposed project or program, and whether they would like to be put on the Ministry's mailing list to receive additional information. Often, people will feel more comfortable talking with you in an informal setting than in the more formal circumstances of a public meeting.

Always wear a name tag listing your first and last names, and your title. Introduce yourself to people whenever possible:



“Good evening and welcome. My name is Sandy Jones, and I’m a planner for the regional office of Environment Ontario. I will be making the presentation tonight on the draft waste management plan. There is a summary handout available on the table. Please feel free to take one.”

or:

“Hello. I’m Sandy Jones. I’m a regional planner with Environment Ontario. Would you mind signing our guest book? We would also appreciate it if you took a few minutes after the meeting to complete one of these comment sheets. Thank you.”

You can also use the time before the start of the meeting to talk informally with people. You may get a sense of their concerns, or a preview of the issues they want to raise at the meeting. Encourage people to raise later in the meeting what they are telling you:

“That’s an important point. I hope you plan to ask it during the question-and-answer session.”

• Chairing the meeting

In some cases, it may be appropriate for you to serve as chair of the meeting. The role of the chairperson has already been discussed. As a Ministry representative, your additional responsibilities include ensuring that the audience understands the scope and objectives of the meeting and of your consultation program.



If the issue is a controversial one, you may have to handle hostile or confrontational comments. Keep calm, and acknowledge what the person is saying. If the person persists, check with the audience to see if people want to continue the discussion or wish to return to the agenda.

• Being a good listener and communicator

During the course of a public meeting, you may be called upon to be a good communicator in three kinds of situations: making a formal presentation; answering questions; and speaking informally with people during a break or after the meeting. All three situations require you to be a good listener and communicator.



As noted earlier, the keys to a good presentation are organization, practice and a natural delivery. Interact with your audience. Check frequently with them:

“... Can everyone at the back hear me?”

“I see some people shaking their heads. I'll repeat this last point.”

Answering questions at a public meeting requires good listening skills and tact. Avoid “labelling” people’s opinions and questions (for example, as “strong”, “unclear” or “contradictory”).

Be cautious about offering your opinion on an issue. Try to keep your responses to the facts; remember that you are a representative of the Ministry. If a question is off topic, try to answer it quickly and move on to the next question. Answer only those questions which you are qualified to answer. Be honest if you do not know the answer, but promise to follow up quickly with a response:

“I’m sorry, but I don’t know the answer to that. If I could get your name and telephone number later, I’ll get back to you tomorrow with the answer.”

If a person is trying to start an argument rather than ask a question, acknowledge what they are saying and move on:

“Thank you for your comments. Perhaps we can discuss this further after the meeting? Do you have any other questions? If not, then the person at the back is next, and then the person over there.”

During breaks and after the meeting, you will have the opportunity to meet with people on an informal, personal

basis. Try to get a sense of how people think the meeting is going. People may often tell you things in such circumstances that they would not say in a larger crowd. Above all, be sensitive to the concerns they express. Answer their questions. However, as a Ministry representative, you should not talk “off the record”. Pay particular attention to your body language during these informal discussions. If you are glancing about the room while a person is talking to you, or are standing with your arms folded tightly against you, you are telling that person that you are not interested.

You could say, for example:

***“We very much appreciate you coming out tonight.
May I ask how you heard about the meeting?”***

“Were the presentations helpful?”

“Did you get a chance to ask all your questions?”

***“Would another meeting be helpful, or should we consider an open house or another activity?
What about a newsletter?”***

“What are your friends/neighbours/co-workers saying about the proposed plan? Do you think people are getting sufficient information on the proposal?”

- **Identifying decisions and next steps**

At the end of the meeting, you or your chairperson should provide a summary of the meeting’s discussion and recommendations. Check with the audience to make sure everyone agrees with the key issues or concerns raised during the meeting:

“... It appears that there is general agreement that option three should be developed more clearly, and that the Ministry should hold another public meeting next month to present the option in more detail. Is that correct?”

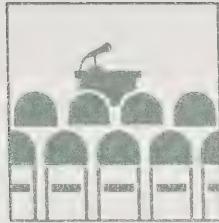
YOUR ROLE

You should also state how any results from the public meeting will be used in future consultation activities:

“As you suggested, I will include the recommendations from this evening’s meeting in the next newsletter so as to invite comments and input from as many people in the region as possible.”

Finally, thank people for attending the meeting and volunteering their time. Ask them to complete the comment sheets, and offer to speak to anyone informally after the meeting:

“Thank you all very much for coming out this evening. For my part, it has been an extremely interesting and productive meeting. I will be happy to stay around for awhile after we conclude if you would like to speak to me. Once again, thank you very much.”



HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

You selected a public meeting to help meet the objectives of your consultation program. Did it succeed? What lessons can you learn from the experience?

Try to build evaluation into your consultation program at all stages. You should seek input from four sources: yourself; the chairperson and any Ministry colleagues who assisted in the activity; people who attended the meeting; and your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator.



1. You, your chairperson and colleagues

As soon as possible, hold a de-briefing session with your chairperson and any other Ministry staff who made presentations or attended. Share your views about how the meeting went. Review how the chairperson handled any controversial or hostile situations. Ask yourselves:

- Did those who you needed to consult attend?
- Did people understand and agree with the objectives of the meeting?
- Did the presentations convey the necessary information?
- Did people understand the answers to their questions?
- Was there a common understanding of the major concerns and recommendations coming out of the meeting?
- What are the immediate follow-up requirements arising from the meeting?
- Do the results of the meeting affect your overall consultation program?

HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

Low attendance does not necessarily mean that your meeting was unsuccessful. Some people might have been too busy to attend. Others may not feel comfortable attending a meeting. However, consider if your advertising strategy needs to be changed, particularly if some of the groups who you know you need to consult or who said they would attend did not attend the meeting. Telephone these groups to discuss the reasons for their absence. Be sure to offer a variety of activities that allow people to be consulted in a way they want to be.

2. People who attended the meeting

Build evaluation into your public meeting's agenda. As part of the closing remarks, either you or the chairperson could invite general comments, as well as ask people to complete comment sheets. Ask if the meeting's time and location were convenient. Ask what people think should be the next step in the public consultation program.

The comment sheet should be simple and easy to complete, with only a few open-ended questions. Use Ministry letterhead or your program's logo on the comment sheet. Though it is preferable to have people complete the comment sheet at the meeting, provide a full mailing address if you are asking people to mail it to you. This handbook has a sample comment sheet. Use it as a model, but remember that your questions should reflect the circumstances and objectives of your public meeting.

When reviewing people's comments, do not take negative comments personally. People may be critical, yet appreciate your efforts. Negative comments may also suggest people were comfortable enough to be critical, believing their comments will be acted upon.

3. Your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator

Ask your Project Co-ordinator to sit in on at least part of your public meeting and be part of the de-briefing exercise. Review the comment sheets with your co-ordinator.

Based on your evaluation, make any necessary changes to your future public meetings or to your consultation program. Take advantage of training courses to improve your program management and consultation skills.

Sample:



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PUBLIC MEETING COMMENT SHEET

1. Do you think the public meeting:
helped you better understand the issue?

Yes _____ No _____
was well organized?

Yes _____ No _____
gave you an adequate opportunity to express
your views?

Yes _____ No _____
a/v materials and handouts were helpful?
Yes _____ No _____

2. Do you think another public meeting would be helpful?
Yes _____ No _____

3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

4. Would you like to receive additional information on
the project?

Yes _____ No _____

Would you like to be on the Ministry's mailing list to
receive information about other Ministry activities and
policies?

Yes _____ No _____

If you checked "Yes", please fill in:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Thank you for completing this Comment Sheet.

Sample:



Ministry
of the
Environment

Ministère
de
l'Environnement

PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

1. Opening Comments and Introduction

Chairman: Paul Emond, Osgoode Hall Law School

2. Presentations:

Ministry:

Purpose and Scope of Meeting
John Budz, District Officer
Peel/Halton District Office

Region of Peel:

Region's report on blood levels of children living in close proximity to the Tonolli Company of Canada Ltd., Mississauga

Ministry:

Ministry's report on lead concentrations in soil on properties in the vicinity of Tonolli Company of Canada Ltd., Mississauga

Rob Rinne, Coordinator Field Investigation
Phytotoxicology Section

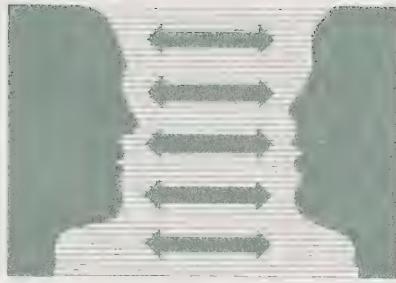
3. Comments and Questions

4. Closing Comments

Roy Cornish, President
Sherway Homeowners and Recreation Association Inc.
John Walmark, President
Applewood Acres Homeowners Association
Margaret Marland, M.P.P.
Mississauga South

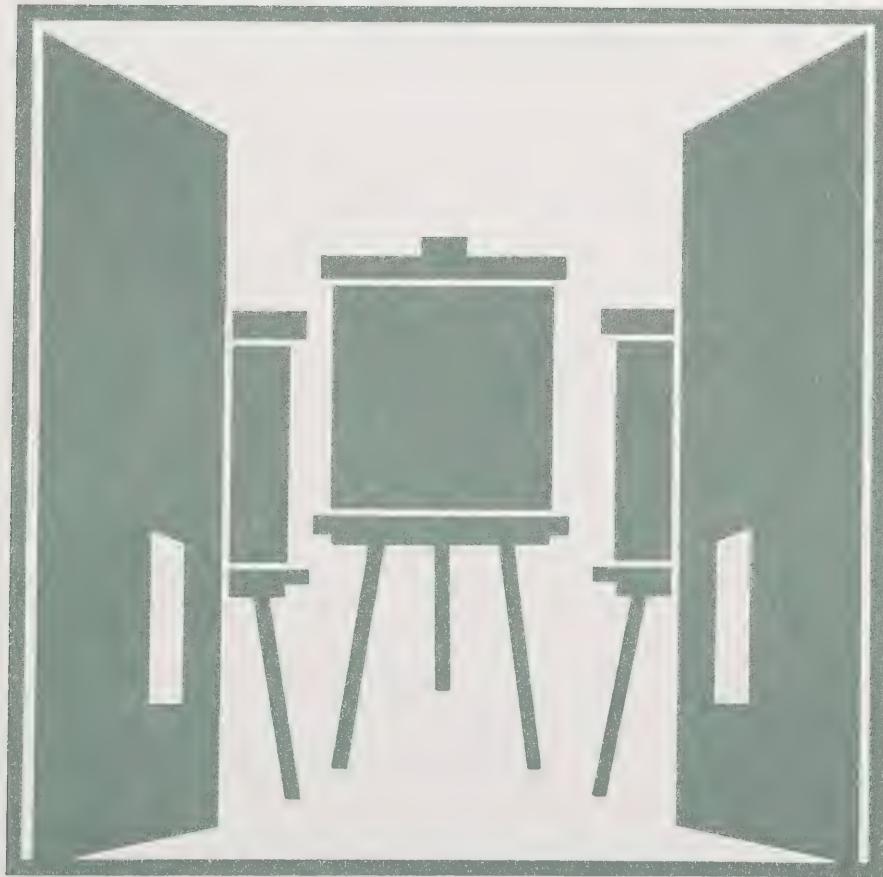
CAZON
EV
- 1990
P91

Government
Publications



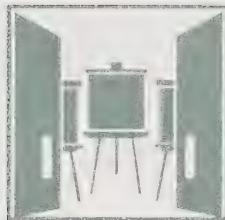
HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION HANDBOOK



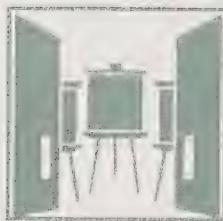
Environment
Ontario





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IS AN OPEN HOUSE FOR YOU?

An open house is a relatively informal event designed to allow people to drop in to obtain information and ask questions at their own convenience. Typically, it consists of a display presentation, complemented by handout materials and the presence of Ministry staff to answer any questions one-on-one. In some cases, others may also present display materials at your open house.

An open house is held in a convenient location within the community and usually lasts several hours in the day and/or evening, in accordance with the preferences and needs of the concerned audiences. Ministry staff serve as “hosts” to welcome each visitor and provide a brief orientation to the presentation and handout materials. As host, you establish a low-key presence, and are available to respond to questions or comments.

An open house can be used at all stages of your public consultation program: to introduce the proposed project; to outline options; and to help you report on final decisions. It can help you meet the following objectives:

- Providing information**

An open house is an excellent way for you to convey information to people, particularly information that can be clarified through visual aids such as maps, charts, graphs, diagrams or pictures. For example, an open house is ideal for displaying design or construction plans, or for showing the location of a site on a map. It is also useful in showing comparisons between alternative proposals, such as alternative sites for a certain project, by showing their location and topography.



IS AN OPEN HOUSE FOR YOU?

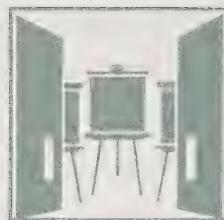
- **Understanding people's concerns and discussing issues**

The opportunity to speak with people individually will give you a better understanding of their concerns. If possible, go beyond just identifying people's concerns, and try to understand the nature of these concerns. As well, a comment sheet will help you learn more about people's views. This information will help you decide what your next steps should be in the consultation program.

- **Following up**

Through an open house you can provide follow-up information in a detailed format suitable for individual review.





SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are three key factors to keep in mind if you are planning to use an open house as part of your public consultation program:



1. Attendance is difficult to predict.

One of the drawbacks of an open house is that attendance is very difficult to predict. The location you have selected may be far too large or much too small to handle the number of visitors who attend.

Low attendance does not necessarily mean your open house was unsuccessful, but it does require you to evaluate the next steps of your program. You may find that you did not inform as many people as you had hoped, and this may require you to carry out different consultation activities than you had originally planned. For example, an additional mailing or a newsletter may be needed.

2. Advertise to suit the community.

The uncertainty about attendance at your open house underscores the need to understand the particular circumstances of the community and the need to advertise in a manner appropriate to the community's needs. What suits a large metropolitan area will not suit a rural farming community.

Informal personal communication with people in the community well in advance of the open house, such as telephone calls and "coffee shop" discussions, will help you design and advertise the event more appropriately. In some cases, it may be all the advertising you need.

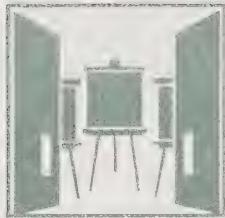
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. Select the location carefully.

The location of your open house must satisfy a long list of logistical concerns. Just as important, however, will be the reaction of people in the community to the selected site.

Whether it is fair or not, many people in the community will judge you and the Ministry by the location of your open house. Attitudes towards certain locations that may be taken for granted in a community will be unknown to you. A location that is ideal in a university town, for example, may not attract many people in a steel-manufacturing town.

You will need to rely on the knowledge and experience of others as well as informal communication with people in the community to get advice on a suitable location.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

Step 1: Understand Your Objectives and Develop a Workplan

Use the ideas and suggestions in **THE GUIDE** to make sure that an open house is the most effective form of consultation for meeting your current needs.



Develop a workplan to meet your objectives. Consider the staff, resources and time you have available. Use **THE CHECKLIST** so that all the requirements of an open house will be addressed. Delegate tasks, but make sure that someone — if not yourself — is responsible for overseeing all stages of planning.

Check with your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch to find out:

- How the information you want to convey can be presented in a display
- How much time it will take to design and produce the display
- How the display materials can be transported from place to place, given their weight and durability
- How you can improve your communication skills to host the open house

Step 2: Schedule the Place and Time

Your selection of location should depend on your audience. Your choice can say a great deal about how well you understand and appreciate the concerns of your audience.

S	M	T	W
	1	2	3
7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17

Do not use Ministry offices unless you have no other option. You are trying to find some “neutral” ground to encourage

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

people to attend your open house, and to learn about your project.

Typical locations include schools, community centres, public libraries, conference centres and hotel facilities. You will want to consider the availability of individual rooms for showing the display, accommodating discussion, and serving refreshments. Also consider the availability of parking, proximity to bus routes, and access for disabled persons.

The room should be easy to find. It should be large enough to house a display and accommodate your expected turnout. Lighting, location of electrical outlets, availability of furniture and location of washrooms are other considerations.

You will need to book the room for an extended period of time to cover setting up and dismantling the display.

If your open house goes on for more than one day or evening, find out whether you will be able to secure the room and leave your display assembled, or whether you will need to dismantle the display between showings.

You will need to accommodate a variety of schedules in determining the hours of operation for your open house. Try to hold the event for at least three hours in the afternoon and again in the evening. You may have to hold it at different times to accommodate shift workers in the community. In larger centres, you may need to hold your open house on consecutive evenings or on the weekend to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to attend.

Remember that in some cases, one or more groups may be displaying materials at your open house. (See, for example, the case study in **THE GUIDE** on a typical public consultation program for a Control Order.) You will need to keep these groups informed about your plans for the open house and accommodate their display requirements.

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

Step 3: Advertise

NOTE: The Communications Branch is responsible for placing all paid advertising.

The success of your open house depends a great deal on your ability to inform the public of the event, and to interest them in attending.

Once you have scheduled the open house, work with the Communications Branch to develop an advertising campaign. Your method of advertising will depend on your audience.

If the community is small, you might consider using posters, personal invitations by mail or telephone, community newsletters and bulletin boards. If you already have a mailing list of interested individuals, be sure to invite them, in addition to your other advertising.

Given a larger audience, you should consider advertising in major newspapers, and public service announcements on television and radio.

You may need to plan your advertising six or seven weeks before you actually hold the event. Advertising should begin at least two weeks before the event. The Communications Branch needs an additional four weeks to prepare and place any advertising. If possible, try and run newspaper advertisements more than once. If you are planning public service announcements, make arrangements at least four weeks prior to when you want the announcement made.

Posters and notices should provide details about the open house, such as the availability of parking, babysitting, and refreshments. All notices should have a name and telephone number for people to call to obtain more information about the event.



Step 4: Develop the Display and Supporting Materials

Consider the information you want to communicate through the open house, and think about how it might be displayed. At the same time, consider other factors that will affect your timetable. How much time will it take to put together the kind of display you want? Are you restricted in terms of dates?



Be actively involved with your Project Co-ordinator in the design of the display. Your display should:

- Have an overview and reflect the most important points; have the details on separate handouts
- Be attractive yet simple
- Have script that is large and easy to read
- Have display boards that are a reasonable height from the floor
- Have charts, graphs, diagrams, maps or pictures to clarify your message
- Include an outline of the next steps in the planning process and the next opportunities for public consultation

Besides handouts, other supporting materials that could be made available at the open house include Ministry reports, brochures, speeches, newsletters, and copies of legislation and regulations. To obtain these publications, contact your Project Co-ordinator or the Ministry's Public Information Centre (416/323-4321).

Step 5: Set Up

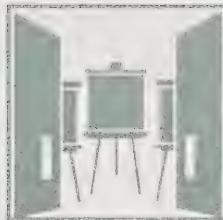
In setting up your open house, create a comfortable atmosphere. A pleasant and relaxed atmosphere will encourage people to take their time looking at the display and to ask questions and talk with you.



Be ready about half an hour before the event is scheduled to begin.

Consider the following:

- Signs should be posted to direct people from the building entrance to the open house room or rooms.
- The floor layout should have an obvious starting point, and should be set up so people can move through a logical sequence of information.
- If the room you are using is very large, such as a school gym, try and create a 'smaller room' within this space by using partitions. Consider laying out your display in a zig-zag pattern, so that you create 'aisles' for people to follow through the display.
- Each host should have a name tag. First and last names should be used (rather than initials), and the tag should also state the host's occupation, area of expertise and organization.
- Have a table near the door where a sign-in sheet is available. In addition, have someone responsible for inviting visitors to complete a comment sheet before they leave.
- If you have slides or a video as part of the display, have a separate area that can be darkened.
- Handouts and other supporting material should be prominently displayed.
- Have a small area where refreshments are available, and a few chairs and tables so that people may sit down.



YOUR ROLE

As a host at the open house, you are responsible for the following:

- **Preparing and briefing all hosts**

Hosting an open house requires good interpersonal communication skills and good planning. You will need to ensure that all those serving as hosts are well prepared. Make sure all your hosts are aware of their responsibilities. Try to anticipate difficult questions. Consider role-playing exercises to give staff practice in responding to different situations that could arise during the open house. Take advantage of training courses.

- **Greeting visitors**

When people arrive at the open house, greet them at the door. Provide a brief orientation to the room, encourage them to view the materials at their own pace, and invite them to ask questions. Refer to the comment sheets. If you are busy with someone, acknowledge a new visitor with a smile and a nod.



“Good evening. Welcome to the open house on the proposed clean-up plan for the harbourfront. My name is Pat Smith. I’m a planner in the regional office of the Ministry of Environment.

“As you can see, we have a series of display boards in the room outlining the background to the problem, and summarizing the series of recommendations which the public advisory committee has made. On that table are some handout materials on the program. Please feel free to take a copy.

"If you have any questions about the program, either my colleague Sandy Jones or I would be pleased to answer them for you. There is some coffee and juice on the table in the corner.

"If you have a minute afterwards, we'd very much appreciate receiving your comments on the open house. The comment sheets are there on the table beside the brochures. Thank you."

• Responding to questions

Hosts should be both good listeners and good communicators. Listen to questions carefully. Be relaxed and open in your answers. Be careful to explain all terms.



If a large crowd of people arrive and all want to ask questions at once, try to gather them into a group so that they can hear the comments and questions of others. When you reply to a question, address the group as a whole, rather than the individual who asked it. Encourage people to share their ideas. Give as much individual attention to people as possible, but remember that it is also helpful to have people learn from one another.

"That is a really interesting question. Did everyone hear it? Let me repeat it for those who didn't. The question was . . ."

If someone wants to monopolize your time, encourage them to leave their name so that you can contact them later.

"Perhaps we could continue this discussion a little later? Or if you'd prefer, you could leave your name and number on the comment sheet, and I would be happy to call you tomorrow to discuss this further."

Keep in mind, however, that it is the prerogative of the visitors to the open house to ask whatever questions they like and, in effect, to set the agenda. Try to address whatever questions they ask, unless they are keeping you from helping others.

For more ideas on how to handle questions, see **THE GUIDE**.

- **Seeking visitors' comments**

As people leave the open house, someone should be by the door to thank them for visiting. In particular, you should invite people to complete a comment sheet.

“Would you mind taking a minute to fill out this short comment sheet? We’d appreciate any comments you have. If you would like to receive more information on this program or other Ministry activities, please fill in your name and address on the bottom of the comment sheet.”

***“Please put your comment sheet in that box.
Thank you very much for coming out this evening.”***

If you do not have a comment sheet, or if a person does not want to fill one out, consider asking a general question that could provide some helpful information:

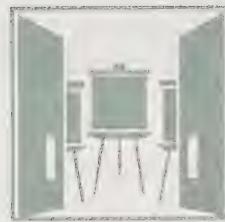
“Did you find the display materials helpful?”

or

“Was this location convenient for you?”

or

“Did you get an answer to your questions?”



HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

You selected an open house to help meet the objectives of your consultation program. Did it succeed? If not, then why not? Build evaluation into your program at all stages.

You should seek evaluation from three sources: you and your colleagues; comment sheets from visitors; and your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch.



1. You and your colleagues

As soon as the open house is over, have a short review session with the other staff who served as hosts. Share your views on how the day went. Share any concerns you heard from people during the course of the open house. Ask yourselves what lessons you learned and how could you do a better job next time. These ideas should be communicated to those staff who may have helped you plan the open house, but who were not in attendance.

2. Comment sheets

A good comment sheet should tell you whether or not you achieved your objectives. The comment sheet should be organized clearly and simply so that it is easy to complete. Ask straightforward “yes-no” questions, leaving room for longer, open-ended comments. Use Ministry letterhead or your program’s logo on the comment sheet. Include a mailing address if people can mail in their comments, although it is preferable to have people complete the sheets before they leave.

This handbook contains a sample comment sheet, but keep in mind that your questions should reflect the particular circumstances of your open house as well as the specific goals you have for the activity.

HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

Look at the completed comment sheets after each open house, and compile the results. This information, along with the observations of the hosting staff, can be used to make adjustments to the format of the open house, or to the layout of the display. While there may be a limit to the kinds of changes you can make in the short intervals between open houses, make some if necessary.

Be sure not to take negative comments personally. Remember that negative comments from visitors do not necessarily mean that your open house was unsuccessful. Try to learn from the comments. Often people are critical of the project, yet appreciative of your efforts. Negative comments also may indicate that people felt comfortable enough at your open house to offer criticism. Look beyond the words on the sheet and think about what people were really saying.

3. Your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator

Ask your Project Co-ordinator to attend your open house and to help in the evaluation process afterwards. The co-ordinator should be able to provide helpful comments on both how the open house was organized and how it was conducted.

Based on the evaluation from these sources, make any necessary changes to your consultation program. Take advantage of training opportunities to improve your consultation and program management skills.

Sample:



Ministry
of the
Environment

Ministère
de
l'Environnement

COMMENT SHEET

1. Did the open house help you understand more about _____?
Yes _____ No _____

2. Were your questions answered to your satisfaction?
Yes _____ No _____

3. Were the display materials helpful?
Yes _____ No _____

4. Were the time and location of the open house convenient for you?
Yes _____ No _____

5. Do you have any comments or suggestions about the open house to help us next time?

6. Do you have any comments about the (proposed project or topic under consultation)?

7. Would you like to receive additional information on this proposal?
Yes _____ No _____

8. Would you like to be on the Ministry's mailing list to receive information about other Ministry activities and policies?
Yes _____ No _____

If you checked "yes" to #7 or #8, please fill in:

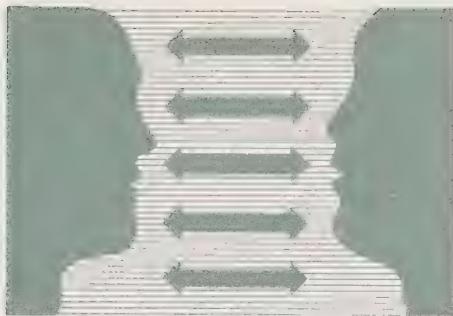
Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Thank you for completing this Comment Sheet.

CAZON
EV
- 1990
P71



PROVIDING PROPER NOTIFICATION

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION HANDBOOK

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Noticeboard

Tomorrow

Meetings

Grace General Hospital Auxiliary, 1 p.m., Assembly Room.

Bells Corners Christian Women's Club, 6:45 p.m., 3861 Richmond Rd. S. 226-2055, 721-0105.

Al-Anon, for families of alcoholics, and Alcoholics Anonymous, 8 p.m. Fridays, St. Timothy's Church, 2400 Alta Vista Dr.

PHOTOREPRESSIVE COMM.



Environment
Ontario



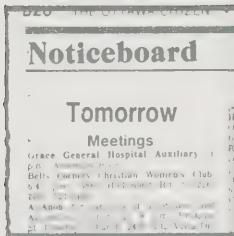


It is Environment Ontario's policy to consult the public. As a result, public consultation has become essential to the effective implementation of Ontario's environmental and regulatory programs.

Successful consultation is dependent upon informing people that there is a consultation program, as well as the details of that program.

WHAT IS PUBLIC CONSULTATION ?

Public consultation allows affected or interested individuals, organizations, agencies and other levels of government to participate in and have an influence on the ministry's decision-making process. Public consultation provides a means by which the concerns, needs, and values of others can be identified in advance of any decision so that the decision is more responsive to public concerns and priorities.



WHAT IS NOTIFICATION ?

In general, notification informs your public of a consultation program, provides the invitation to become involved and explains how people can make their contribution.

There are two types of notification.

1. The first type has two parts.

Part one consists of a general announcement that a consultation program is planned or is underway.

This announcement:

- indicates the topic or issue;
- identifies who or what organization is undertaking the consultation; and
- provides a contact (name, address and / or telephone number) so people can request more information or have their questions answered.

The first consultation activity is usually identified in this notification.

The second part is notification that occurs throughout the program and that provides the details on various program activities. A re-statement of the overall program also is included.

WHAT IS NOTIFICATION

2. The second type of notification is used when an application for a permit (e.g. Certificate of Approval) is being made.

In this type of notification, your public is:

- informed that an application for approval of a project has been or is going to be made;
- provided a description of the project and statement of any impacts; and
- told that comment on the application is welcome and how it can be provided.

When all the relevant information cannot be contained in the notice, notification usually informs people how to get more information and provides a contact.

This kind of consultation program has only one activity and notice of the activity usually is provided only once.



WHO IS YOUR PUBLIC ?

Ask yourself:

1. Who will be directly affected ?

Consider who will be directly impacted by the construction and operation of a facility or affected by a new policy or regulation. People in this category include: workers; neighbors who are affected by air, noise or visual pollution; local industry; and ratepayers, community and other groups.

2. Who will be indirectly affected ?

This category includes: those, for example, who live on a new truck route; or a municipal government where the official plan may be affected.

3. Who might have an interest or feel they are affected ?

Business, environmental and other non-local groups fall into this category. Municipalities also should be considered as these governments are interested in anything happening in their community.

Answering the three questions will identify the widest possible audience that will or may be interested in your consultation program.

WHO TO NOTIFY ?

Too often, only the most obvious people are notified or hear of a consultation program. This can lead to the complaint by some that they never had an opportunity to become involved, that "You never told me !" Proper notification of those who will be interested in your project will help you to avoid that situation.

Therefore, who you will notify of your program requires careful thought.

Ask others for their advice. Municipal councillors, community, ratepayer or local environmental groups are good contacts. Your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch also can provide some guidance.

HOW TO NOTIFY ?

Who you notify should determine how you notify them. For example, if you want an out-of-town group to be involved in your program, a letter would be more effective than placing an advertisement in a local newspaper.

HOW TO NOTIFY ?

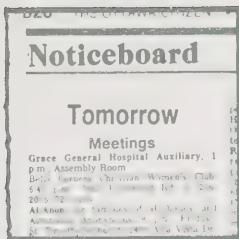
There are two types of notification: targeted and general.

Targeted notification includes:

- sending letters or other mailings to specific groups or individuals;
- dropping leaflets in mailboxes or putting them in hydro/tax bills;
- putting a notice on the property of a project;
- making telephone calls;
- advertising in a trade magazine or community newsletter.

General notification includes:

- placing advertisements in newspapers or on radio (you can somewhat target your audience by selecting a medium that has a specific audience);
- distributing public service announcements;
- holding a news conference/issuing a news release;
- meeting with a local group;
- asking people to tell others (“word of mouth”);
- putting brochures or other materials in libraries, corner grocery stores, post offices, church bulletins or various community agencies’ offices.



Whatever approach you take, notification is only effective if it is visible to those you want to inform of your consultation program. As well, notification must take place well in advance of the consultation, occurring at least two weeks before any activity. When appropriate, notification should be repeated.

The best public consultation programs ensure that people not only have plenty of advance notice of any consultation activity, but are provided a reminder, as well.

Sometimes notification leads to requests or a need for additional consultation. For guidance on selecting appropriate consultation activities, refer to *Public Consultation: A Resource Kit for Ministry Staff*.

Sample :



METRO TORONTO SOLID WASTE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PLAN



**OUR LANDFILLS ARE FILLING UP!
WHAT CAN WE DO WITH OUR GARBAGE?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH IT?**

You can be a participant in the development of the Solid Waste Environmental Assessment Plan (SWEAP), a new waste management master plan, for Metro Toronto and the Regions of York and Durham.

Call 392-5420 or 1-800-387-9200.

WE NEED YOU! JOIN SWEAP NOW!

F.J. Horgan, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Works
The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

C. Dennis Flynn
Metropolitan Chairman

This newspaper advertisement also could be used as a transit ad.

Sample :



700 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1X6

March 10, 1989

Dear Property Owner/Tenant:

Electrical Transmission Facilities
to the Sarnia and Windsor Areas--
Public Information Centres

Ontario Hydro is looking to build two additional high-voltage transmission lines from the new Longwood Transformer Station near London to the Sarnia and Windsor areas. Alternative routes for the new lines are shown on the enclosed map. These potential routes were identified only after months of detailed environmental, social and technical studies, and consultation with community representatives.

A series of Public Information Centres is being held in several locations from March 28 to April 20. You will find a schedule of information centre dates and locations inserted into the enclosed newsletter. The centres will also be advertised in local newspapers. Information centres in the Windsor area will be held later this spring.

We are notifying you directly because your property is in close proximity to one of the alternative routes. We invite you to visit one of the centres to discuss the routes with Hydro staff. Please bring the enclosed comment form with you. (Note: Because our mailing labels are computer-generated, you will receive a separate notice for each property you own.)

We hope to see you at one of the centres. However, if you are unable to attend a centre, or simply wish further information, please call collect to: Ms. Lynn Williams at (416) 592-8991; or Mrs. Carrie-Lynn Ognibene at (416) 592-3920.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.G. Hewitt".

M.G. Hewitt
Supervising Community Relations Officer (Acting)
Design and Development Division - Transmission

Encl

Sample :

Remedial Action Plan Plan d'Assainissement

May 1, 1989

Dr. H.
c/o North Shore Steelhead
Association
Cottonwood Drive
THUNDER BAY, Ontario
P7A 3L8

Dear Dr.

As you are probably aware, the Thunder Bay Remedial Action Plan (RAP) process is currently in the public consultation phase. A Public Advisory Committee (PAC) is being set up on which I hope that the North Shore Steelhead Association will be represented. If this is the case, would you please nominate a representative for the committee and forward their name and number to me.

We will have an introductory meeting on May 16, 1989, 7:30-9:00 p.m. at Lakehead University UC0003i, and hope therefore that you are able to make a decision prior to this date.

Thank you for your interest and help.

Yours truly,

L. ak
J. Vander Wal
Coordinator
Thunder Bay, RAP

HP:ag

Canada-Ontario
Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting Great Lakes Water Quality
L'Accord Canada-Ontario relatif à la qualité de l'eau dans les Grands Lacs

Sample :

PUBLIC MEETING

Allison's Gas Bar

Williamsburgh Township

Environment Ontario invites residents in the area of Winchester Springs to review the details of a proposed Control Order to be issued to R.S. Allison & Sons Limited, owner of Allison's Gas Bar, Concession 8, Lot 32, Williamsburgh township.

The water supply of a residential property in Winchester Springs has been contaminated with gasoline originating from Allison's Gas Bar. The situation will be summarized at the meeting by Environment Ontario staff.

For more information, contact Rheal Delaquis of the ministry's Cornwall District Office at (613) 933-7402.

Date: May 18, 1989

Location: Winchester Springs Community Hall

Time: 7:30 p.m.



Environment
Ontario

Jim Bradley, Minister

This newspaper advertisement would work well as a leaflet.

Sample :



CONTACT: Kal Haniff
Canadian Coordinator
(519) 336-4030
Diana Klemans
U.S. Coordinator
(517) 373-2758

NOTE TO EDITORS

MEETING NUMBER EIGHT
FOR THE ST. CLAIR RIVER BPAC

A meeting of the St. Clair River Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) is scheduled for May 9, 1989 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the St. Clair Community College, Student Center Cafeteria, Port Huron, Michigan.

The Upper Great Lakes Connecting Channels Study (UGLCCS) will be the main item of discussion. This recently released report provides a detailed assessment of the environmental conditions of the St. Clair River, as well as the Detroit and St. Marys Rivers and Lake St. Clair.

On the basis of the data provided from this four year study, the BPAC will help the RAP Team identify data gaps and update the information to reflect the current environmental situation.

Everyone is invited to attend the meeting. To contact Kal Haniff, Canadian RAP Coordinator, call the RAP-Line: 1-800-265-0248 (area codes 705, 519, 416 only).

**Remedial Action Plan
Plan d'Assainissement**

Canada Ontario DNR

Sample :

HELP CLEAN UP ONTARIO'S WATERWAYS

The Ontario government is now adopting tough new measures to stop water pollution at its source. MISA – Municipal/Industrial Strategy for Abatement – will systematically cut back the flow of toxic pollutants with enforceable regulations that get tougher as abatement technology gets better.

The seventh regulation, the Effluent Monitoring Regulation for the Metal Casting Sector, will require metal casting plants to report the concentrations and total amounts of toxic chemicals in their discharges. Industry self-monitoring will be audited by the Ministry of the Environment. Information obtained from monitoring will be used to formulate an abatement regulation which will set discharge limits on the toxic chemicals detected. Discharge limits will be made more stringent as pollution control technology improves.

All MISA regulations are issued under Section 136 of the *Environmental Protection Act*. Convicted violators of the Act face fines of up to \$50,000 a day for each offence.

WE WANT YOUR COMMENTS

The monitoring regulation for the metal casting sector is being issued in draft form to allow for a 30-day public review period. The Ministry of the Environment invites your written comments on the regulation. Please submit comments to Jim Bradley, Minister of the Environment, 135 St. Clair Ave. West, Toronto, M4V 1P5, by May 24, 1989.

To obtain a copy of the regulation, please contact:

Ministry of the Environment, Public Information Centre
135 St Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5
(416) 323-4321

or one of the regional offices:

Toronto: (416) 424-3000	Thunder Bay: (807) 475-1205
Hamilton: (416) 521-7640	Cornwall: (613) 933-7402
London: (519) 661-2200	Windsor: (519) 254-2546
Kingston: (613) 549-4000	Ottawa: (613) 521-3450
Sudbury: (705) 675-4501	



Ministry
of the
Environment

Jim Bradley, Minister

**STOPPING
WATER POLLUTION
AT ITS SOURCE**



This advertisement could be placed in local newspapers, community newsletters or trade magazines.

Sample :

NOTICE

Application has been filed with the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario for a LIQUOR LICENCE or additional licensed facilities for premises situated at this location.

Any resident of the municipality wishing to make representation relative to the application should make their submission to the Board in writing prior to the date of the public meeting or in person at the time and place of the meeting.

Director,
Licensing and Permit Branch
Liquor Licence Board of Ontario
55 Lakeshore Boulevard East
Toronto, Ontario M5E 1A4

The Liquor Licence Board of Ontario



Ministry of
Consumer and
Commercial
Relations

Time and place of meeting/H

Date/Date _____ T

Location/Adresse _____

Dated/En date du _____

A site posting.

AVIS

**Une demande de LICENCE DE VENTE
D'ALCOOL ou d'espace supplémentaire
licencié a été déposée à la Commission des
permis de vente d'alcool de l'Ontario pour
les locaux situés à cette adresse.**

**Tout résident de la municipalité ayant des
objections relativement à cette demande devrait
les présenter par écrit avant la date
de la réunion ou en personne à l'heure
et au lieu de la réunion.**

re et lieu de la réunion

/Heure _____

Directeur
Réglementation et délivrance
des permis
Commission des permis
de vente d'alcool de l'Ontario
55, boulevard Lakeshore est
Toronto (Ontario) M5E 1A4

La Commission des permis
de vente d'alcool de l'Ontario



Ministère de la
Consommation
et du
Commerce

Sample :

Committee of Adjustment

City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2
Tel: 392-7565
Fax: 392-0580



C. Diane Stevenson Administrator and Secretary-Treasurer
Geo. E. Lewthwaite Deputy Administrator and Secretary-Treasurer

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING RE: DOVERCOURT ROAD

PLACE: Committee Room No.3, 2nd Floor, City Hall, Toronto
DATE: Tuesday, May 9, 1989
TIME: 6:30 P.M.

REASONS FOR THIS NOTICE

Assessed owners of property in the vicinity of a property that is the subject of an application to the Committee of Adjustment are entitled to receive a notice informing them of the applicant's proposal. You may attend this hearing and/or file your views in writing with the Administrator and Secretary-Treasurer.

NOTE: If you do not attend or are not represented at this hearing, the Committee may proceed in your absence and you will not be entitled to any further notice of the proceedings. Attendance at this hearing is not mandatory, except by the owner and/or representative of the subject property.

DOVERCOURT ROAD

In accordance with the provisions of sections 49, 52 and 53 of the Planning Act, the Committee of Adjustment for the City of Toronto will be considering an application filed by Ontario Inc., through their agents, regarding the above mentioned property.

THE APPLICANT REQUESTS PERMISSION TO:

Sever the subject property into three lots, for the construction thereon of one detached house and a pair of semi-detached houses, and being shown more particularly on a plan attached to and forming a part of the application to the Committee of Adjustment.

REQUEST FOR DECISION

If you would like a copy of the Committee of Adjustment's decision, the request for the decision must be made in writing. Address your request to the Administrator and Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment, City Hall, Toronto, M5H 2N2, prior to or at the hearing.

VIEWING OF FILES AND PLANS

You may view files and plans in the office of the Committee of Adjustment, Main Floor, City Hall, Monday to Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., by appointment only.

DATED at The City of Toronto this April 25th, 1989.

Marveline J. Arzadon,
Supervisor, Applications
and Notification.

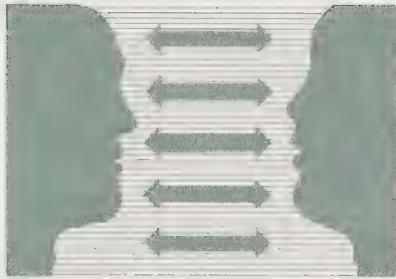
Members: I.J. Freed Chairman, S. Clodman, M.R. Figol, Y. Hancock, A. Petricic, P.H. Reinhardt, E.P. Summers.
J. ter Woert, H.D. Ungerma

Address all correspondence to the Administrator and Secretary-Treasurer

This letter can either be mailed or put in mailboxes as a leaflet.

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- 1990
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Government
Publications



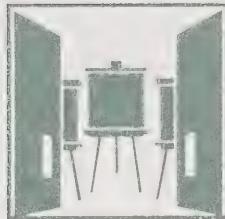
HOLDING A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION HANDBOOK



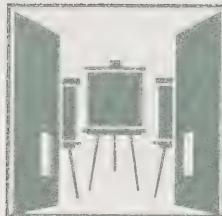
Environment
Ontario





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IS AN OPEN HOUSE FOR YOU?

An open house is a relatively informal event designed to allow people to drop in to obtain information and ask questions at their own convenience. Typically, it consists of a display presentation, complemented by handout materials and the presence of Ministry staff to answer any questions one-on-one. In some cases, others may also present display materials at your open house.

An open house is held in a convenient location within the community and usually lasts several hours in the day and/or evening, in accordance with the preferences and needs of the concerned audiences. Ministry staff serve as “hosts” to welcome each visitor and provide a brief orientation to the presentation and handout materials. As host, you establish a low-key presence, and are available to respond to questions or comments.

An open house can be used at all stages of your public consultation program: to introduce the proposed project; to outline options; and to help you report on final decisions. It can help you meet the following objectives:

- Providing information**

An open house is an excellent way for you to convey information to people, particularly information that can be clarified through visual aids such as maps, charts, graphs, diagrams or pictures. For example, an open house is ideal for displaying design or construction plans, or for showing the location of a site on a map. It is also useful in showing comparisons between alternative proposals, such as alternative sites for a certain project, by showing their location and topography.



IS AN OPEN HOUSE FOR YOU?

- **Understanding people's concerns and discussing issues**

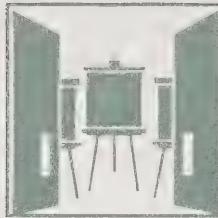
The opportunity to speak with people individually will give you a better understanding of their concerns. If possible, go beyond just identifying people's concerns, and try to understand the nature of these concerns. As well, a comment sheet will help you learn more about people's views. This information will help you decide what your next steps should be in the consultation program.



- **Following up**

Through an open house you can provide follow-up information in a detailed format suitable for individual review.





SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are three key factors to keep in mind if you are planning to use an open house as part of your public consultation program:



1. Attendance is difficult to predict.

One of the drawbacks of an open house is that attendance is very difficult to predict. The location you have selected may be far too large or much too small to handle the number of visitors who attend.

Low attendance does not necessarily mean your open house was unsuccessful, but it does require you to evaluate the next steps of your program. You may find that you did not inform as many people as you had hoped, and this may require you to carry out different consultation activities than you had originally planned. For example, an additional mailing or a newsletter may be needed.

2. Advertise to suit the community.

The uncertainty about attendance at your open house underscores the need to understand the particular circumstances of the community and the need to advertise in a manner appropriate to the community's needs. What suits a large metropolitan area will not suit a rural farming community.

Informal personal communication with people in the community well in advance of the open house, such as telephone calls and "coffee shop" discussions, will help you design and advertise the event more appropriately. In some cases, it may be all the advertising you need.

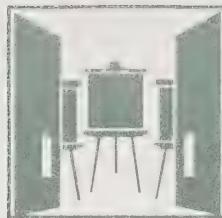
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. Select the location carefully.

The location of your open house must satisfy a long list of logistical concerns. Just as important, however, will be the reaction of people in the community to the selected site.

Whether it is fair or not, many people in the community will judge you and the Ministry by the location of your open house. Attitudes towards certain locations that may be taken for granted in a community will be unknown to you. A location that is ideal in a university town, for example, may not attract many people in a steel-manufacturing town.

You will need to rely on the knowledge and experience of others as well as informal communication with people in the community to get advice on a suitable location.



FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

Step 1: Understand Your Objectives and Develop a Workplan

Use the ideas and suggestions in **THE GUIDE** to make sure that an open house is the most effective form of consultation for meeting your current needs.



Develop a workplan to meet your objectives. Consider the staff, resources and time you have available. Use **THE CHECKLIST** so that all the requirements of an open house will be addressed. Delegate tasks, but make sure that someone — if not yourself — is responsible for overseeing all stages of planning.

Check with your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch to find out:

- How the information you want to convey can be presented in a display
- How much time it will take to design and produce the display
- How the display materials can be transported from place to place, given their weight and durability
- How you can improve your communication skills to host the open house

Step 2: Schedule the Place and Time

Your selection of location should depend on your audience. Your choice can say a great deal about how well you understand and appreciate the concerns of your audience.

S	M	T	W
	1	2	3
7	8	9	10
14	15	16	17

Do not use Ministry offices unless you have no other option. You are trying to find some “neutral” ground to encourage

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

people to attend your open house, and to learn about your project.

Typical locations include schools, community centres, public libraries, conference centres and hotel facilities. You will want to consider the availability of individual rooms for showing the display, accommodating discussion, and serving refreshments. Also consider the availability of parking, proximity to bus routes, and access for disabled persons.

The room should be easy to find. It should be large enough to house a display and accommodate your expected turnout. Lighting, location of electrical outlets, availability of furniture and location of washrooms are other considerations.

You will need to book the room for an extended period of time to cover setting up and dismantling the display.

If your open house goes on for more than one day or evening, find out whether you will be able to secure the room and leave your display assembled, or whether you will need to dismantle the display between showings.

You will need to accommodate a variety of schedules in determining the hours of operation for your open house. Try to hold the event for at least three hours in the afternoon and again in the evening. You may have to hold it at different times to accommodate shift workers in the community. In larger centres, you may need to hold your open house on consecutive evenings or on the weekend to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to attend.

Remember that in some cases, one or more groups may be displaying materials at your open house. (See, for example, the case study in **THE GUIDE** on a typical public consultation program for a Control Order.) You will need to keep these groups informed about your plans for the open house and accommodate their display requirements.

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

Step 3: Advertise

NOTE: The Communications Branch is responsible for placing all paid advertising.

The success of your open house depends a great deal on your ability to inform the public of the event, and to interest them in attending.



Once you have scheduled the open house, work with the Communications Branch to develop an advertising campaign. Your method of advertising will depend on your audience.

If the community is small, you might consider using posters, personal invitations by mail or telephone, community newsletters and bulletin boards. If you already have a mailing list of interested individuals, be sure to invite them, in addition to your other advertising.

Given a larger audience, you should consider advertising in major newspapers, and public service announcements on television and radio.

You may need to plan your advertising six or seven weeks before you actually hold the event. Advertising should begin at least two weeks before the event. The Communications Branch needs an additional four weeks to prepare and place any advertising. If possible, try and run newspaper advertisements more than once. If you are planning public service announcements, make arrangements at least four weeks prior to when you want the announcement made.

Posters and notices should provide details about the open house, such as the availability of parking, babysitting, and refreshments. All notices should have a name and telephone number for people to call to obtain more information about the event.

FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

Step 4: Develop the Display and Supporting Materials

Consider the information you want to communicate through the open house, and think about how it might be displayed. At the same time, consider other factors that will affect your timetable. How much time will it take to put together the kind of display you want? Are you restricted in terms of dates?



Be actively involved with your Project Co-ordinator in the design of the display. Your display should:

- Have an overview and reflect the most important points; have the details on separate handouts
- Be attractive yet simple
- Have script that is large and easy to read
- Have display boards that are a reasonable height from the floor
- Have charts, graphs, diagrams, maps or pictures to clarify your message
- Include an outline of the next steps in the planning process and the next opportunities for public consultation

Besides handouts, other supporting materials that could be made available at the open house include Ministry reports, brochures, speeches, newsletters, and copies of legislation and regulations. To obtain these publications, contact your Project Co-ordinator or the Ministry's Public Information Centre (416/323-4321).

Step 5: Set Up

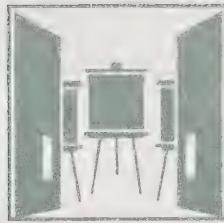
In setting up your open house, create a comfortable atmosphere. A pleasant and relaxed atmosphere will encourage people to take their time looking at the display and to ask questions and talk with you.

Be ready about half an hour before the event is scheduled to begin.



Consider the following:

- Signs should be posted to direct people from the building entrance to the open house room or rooms.
- The floor layout should have an obvious starting point, and should be set up so people can move through a logical sequence of information.
- If the room you are using is very large, such as a school gym, try and create a 'smaller room' within this space by using partitions. Consider laying out your display in a zig-zag pattern, so that you create 'aisles' for people to follow through the display.
- Each host should have a name tag. First and last names should be used (rather than initials), and the tag should also state the host's occupation, area of expertise and organization.
- Have a table near the door where a sign-in sheet is available. In addition, have someone responsible for inviting visitors to complete a comment sheet before they leave.
- If you have slides or a video as part of the display, have a separate area that can be darkened.
- Handouts and other supporting material should be prominently displayed.
- Have a small area where refreshments are available, and a few chairs and tables so that people may sit down.



YOUR ROLE

As a host at the open house, you are responsible for the following:

- Preparing and briefing all hosts**

Hosting an open house requires good interpersonal communication skills and good planning. You will need to ensure that all those serving as hosts are well prepared. Make sure all your hosts are aware of their responsibilities. Try to anticipate difficult questions. Consider role-playing exercises to give staff practice in responding to different situations that could arise during the open house. Take advantage of training courses.

- Greeting visitors**

When people arrive at the open house, greet them at the door. Provide a brief orientation to the room, encourage them to view the materials at their own pace, and invite them to ask questions. Refer to the comment sheets. If you are busy with someone, acknowledge a new visitor with a smile and a nod.



“Good evening. Welcome to the open house on the proposed clean-up plan for the harbourfront. My name is Pat Smith. I’m a planner in the regional office of the Ministry of Environment.

“As you can see, we have a series of display boards in the room outlining the background to the problem, and summarizing the series of recommendations which the public advisory committee has made. On that table are some handout materials on the program. Please feel free to take a copy.

"If you have any questions about the program, either my colleague Sandy Jones or I would be pleased to answer them for you. There is some coffee and juice on the table in the corner.

"If you have a minute afterwards, we'd very much appreciate receiving your comments on the open house. The comment sheets are there on the table beside the brochures. Thank you."

• Responding to questions

Hosts should be both good listeners and good communicators. Listen to questions carefully. Be relaxed and open in your answers. Be careful to explain all terms.



If a large crowd of people arrive and all want to ask questions at once, try to gather them into a group so that they can hear the comments and questions of others. When you reply to a question, address the group as a whole, rather than the individual who asked it. Encourage people to share their ideas. Give as much individual attention to people as possible, but remember that it is also helpful to have people learn from one another.

"That is a really interesting question. Did everyone hear it? Let me repeat it for those who didn't. The question was . . ."

If someone wants to monopolize your time, encourage them to leave their name so that you can contact them later.

"Perhaps we could continue this discussion a little later? Or if you'd prefer, you could leave your name and number on the comment sheet, and I would be happy to call you tomorrow to discuss this further."

Keep in mind, however, that it is the prerogative of the visitors to the open house to ask whatever questions they like and, in effect, to set the agenda. Try to address whatever questions they ask, unless they are keeping you from helping others.

For more ideas on how to handle questions, see **THE GUIDE**.

- **Seeking visitors' comments**

As people leave the open house, someone should be by the door to thank them for visiting. In particular, you should invite people to complete a comment sheet.

“Would you mind taking a minute to fill out this short comment sheet? We'd appreciate any comments you have. If you would like to receive more information on this program or other Ministry activities, please fill in your name and address on the bottom of the comment sheet.”

“Please put your comment sheet in that box. Thank you very much for coming out this evening.”

If you do not have a comment sheet, or if a person does not want to fill one out, consider asking a general question that could provide some helpful information:

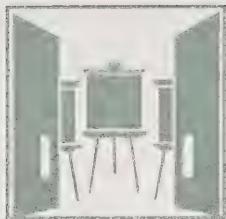
“Did you find the display materials helpful?”

or

“Was this location convenient for you?”

or

“Did you get an answer to your questions?”



HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

You selected an open house to help meet the objectives of your consultation program. Did it succeed? If not, then why not? Build evaluation into your program at all stages.

You should seek evaluation from three sources: you and your colleagues; comment sheets from visitors; and your Project Co-ordinator in the Communications Branch.



1. You and your colleagues

As soon as the open house is over, have a short review session with the other staff who served as hosts. Share your views on how the day went. Share any concerns you heard from people during the course of the open house. Ask yourselves what lessons you learned and how could you do a better job next time. These ideas should be communicated to those staff who may have helped you plan the open house, but who were not in attendance.

2. Comment sheets

A good comment sheet should tell you whether or not you achieved your objectives. The comment sheet should be organized clearly and simply so that it is easy to complete. Ask straightforward "yes-no" questions, leaving room for longer, open-ended comments. Use Ministry letterhead or your program's logo on the comment sheet. Include a mailing address if people can mail in their comments, although it is preferable to have people complete the sheets before they leave.

This handbook contains a sample comment sheet, but keep in mind that your questions should reflect the particular circumstances of your open house as well as the specific goals you have for the activity.

HOW WELL DID YOU DO?

Look at the completed comment sheets after each open house, and compile the results. This information, along with the observations of the hosting staff, can be used to make adjustments to the format of the open house, or to the layout of the display. While there may be a limit to the kinds of changes you can make in the short intervals between open houses, make some if necessary.

Be sure not to take negative comments personally. Remember that negative comments from visitors do not necessarily mean that your open house was unsuccessful. Try to learn from the comments. Often people are critical of the project, yet appreciative of your efforts. Negative comments also may indicate that people felt comfortable enough at your open house to offer criticism. Look beyond the words on the sheet and think about what people were really saying.

3. Your Communications Branch Project Co-ordinator

Ask your Project Co-ordinator to attend your open house and to help in the evaluation process afterwards. The co-ordinator should be able to provide helpful comments on both how the open house was organized and how it was conducted.

Based on the evaluation from these sources, make any necessary changes to your consultation program. Take advantage of training opportunities to improve your consultation and program management skills.

Sample:



Ministry
of the
Environment

Ministère
de
l'Environnement

COMMENT SHEET

1. Did the open house help you understand more about _____?
Yes _____ No _____
2. Were your questions answered to your satisfaction?
Yes _____ No _____
3. Were the display materials helpful?
Yes _____ No _____
4. Were the time and location of the open house convenient for you?
Yes _____ No _____
5. Do you have any comments or suggestions about the open house to help us next time?

6. Do you have any comments about the (proposed project or topic under consultation)?

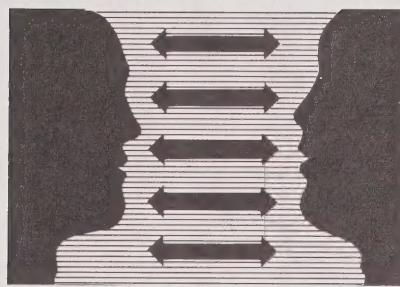
7. Would you like to receive additional information on this proposal?
Yes _____ No _____
8. Would you like to be on the Ministry's mailing list to receive information about other Ministry activities and policies?
Yes _____ No _____

If you checked "yes" to #7 or #8, please fill in:

Name: _____
Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Thank you for completing this Comment Sheet.



THE CHECKLIST

1. PREPARATION

Planning

- Set objectives
- Assess needs
- Determine information needs
- Review resources
- Select activities
- Establish team
- Assign tasks

Evaluation

- Prepare sign-in book
- Prepare comment sheets

Agenda

- Appoint chairperson
- Designate speakers
- Engage resource persons
- Assign other tasks
- Formulate presentations
- Check registration needs

Audio-Visuals

- Prepare handouts
- Produce displays with Communications Branch
- Prepare overheads/slides
- Obtain video/film
- Book appropriate projector(s)
- Obtain microphone/speakers

Advertising

- Contact Communications Branch
- Prepare: Invitations
Posters
Newspaper ads
Notices
Public Service Announcements
Name tags

Logistics

- Book room and consider:
Room size Physical Access
- Lighting Electrical
- Security outlets
- Inspect and pre-test facilities/equipment
- Prepare seating arrangement/head table
- Plan refreshments
- Ensure transportation

2. IMPLEMENTATION

Setting up

- Post signs
- Set up sign-in table
- Set up displays
- Arrange chairs/head table
- Set up audio-visual equipment
- Have extra projector bulbs
- Have spare extension cords
- Set up refreshments

Registration

- Register participants
- Provide sign-up for mailing list

The Event

- Greet people at door
- Start on time or explain delays
- Check if everyone can hear and see
- Provide introductions
- Review scope and objectives of meeting
- Identify next steps
- Record comments and commitments

3. FOLLOW-UP

- Hold de-briefing
- Review comment sheets
- Identify lessons learned
- Assign follow-up tasks
- Prepare/add to mailing list
- Review public consultation program



**Environment
Ontario**

